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WHILE YEARS GO.

BY WM. MACKINTOSH.

Why to-day of all days in rare splendor,
Shine the stars of Peace, Joy and Good-will,
While pity flows freely and tender,
And love bids all malice be still?

Ah! this day the bright Star of Gladness
First arose on this sin-darkened sphere,
And all souls, tho' in gloom or in sadness,
Must light up with solace and cheer.

Its contentment all envy dispelling,
Tho' a crust be one's portion below;
Shedding joys, too, all others excelling,
And that naught upon earth can bestow.

The world's fleeting joys are brief pleasure,
But His love, while eternal years roll,
Shall prove bright Christmas joys beyond measure,
And a song and a star in the soul.

IN SEVERED PATHS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WELCOME home, my dear!" said Mr. Vicat, with the playful affection of a bear, as he embraced his frightened wife. "And how has our invalid borne her long journey?" he added, turning to Estrild with a clumsy attempt at solicitude.

"She has borne it wonderfully well," said Mrs. Vicat, answering for her. "She was quite eager to get to London."

"That flatters me," returned Mr. Vicat, with a smile that made him hateful. "It gratifies me as a parent—an uncle, I mean—to know that a dear niece, was anxious to find herself beneath my roof—a hospitable, kindly roof, I can safely say."

"No, you can't say anything of the kind—not with truth," said a sudden voice, in a snappy manner.

Turning with some slight amazement, Estrild saw a dumpy young woman with a plain countenance, redeemed by large bright eyes and a mass of tow-colored hair piled on the top of her head.

"I am sure you are very tired," she said, changing her tone to one of kindness; "so I have had a good fire lighted in the back-parlor, where you can have your tea all to yourself. I know you'll like that best."

"My dear Carrie," expostulated Mr. Vicat, "why isolate Estrild from the bosom of her family? A social meal taken in the midst of her relatives——"

"Do be quiet, father!" returned the dutiful daughter, in her most disrespectful tone. "And go to the bosom of your family yourself; they are all waiting for you in there"—pointing to an aggressive-looking door, carved all over with knobs—"and shaking in their boots—with delight, of course—at the idea of your coming. Now, Miss Carbonellis, let me pilot you this way. Father would keep us here in the passage all night if we chose to stay and listen to him."

Astonished at the young lady's queer manners, Estrild nevertheless followed her not unwillingly, the thought of being spared the ordeal of facing all the Vicat family being a relief indeed.

In a small room, not unpleasant, though its single window looked out on a narrow, black, and ragged bit of ground, supposed to be a garden, Estrild found a bright fire burning and a round-table spread with tea and cakes.

A little kettle was singing merrily on the hob; there was a sort of kindly welcome in the sound, a touch of home which stirred the heart of the tired girl as she flung herself into a seat and looked up into her new cousin's face with great wistful eyes.

"You must have a cup of tea at once," observed that young lady; and, grasping the kettle, she filled the tea-pot with an adroit hand.

A delicious fragrance rose instantly into the air, soothing the senses and yet bracing the nerves.

Tea was a guinea a pound in those days, but it was worth the money. To what part of the earth that herb of price has now retired no one knows.

"I must say," continued Miss Carrie Vicat, as she plied Estrild with her fragrant tea and delicious cake, "we are about the queerest lot in London. I may as well tell you so at once as to let you find it out for yourself. Father is simply odious—there is no other word for him—and poor mother, though she is good, is a simpleton. I dare say it is wicked to say such things; but I have a horrid propensity for speaking the truth, so I am obliged to say them."

"Why not be contented with speaking the truth only to yourself?" asked Estrild half amused, half repelled by the girl's coarse frankness.

"There—I expected some such slap in the face as that!" exclaimed Carrie, as a bright blush illumined her plain visage. "I know it is uncharitable, or worse—bad taste—to expose the defects of one's family; but you are going to live amongst us—that's why I am outspoken to you. I don't proclaim the truth from the housetops, mind you; and many a time when we do entertain strangers—which isn't often—I listen to father telling heaps of pompous, arrogant fibs, and I never say a word to contradict him. I own I do fly at him afterwards, because by that time I have got so burning hot that I feel I should blaze up if I didn't speak."

"I am not surprised at that," Estrild returned. "I know your father a little."

"Let me give you one word of warning," resumed Carrie—"never allow yourself to be afraid of him. Everybody in the house lives in terror of him except myself, and the consequence is that he sets his foot down on everyone's countenance but mine. He leaves me in peace because I have a temper ten times worse than his own."

"I hope that is not true. You strike me as being good and kind," said Estrild.

"No; I am only vulgarly frank. There is no one good in our family except my step-brother—your real cousin, you know—and perhaps he wouldn't be if he wasn't dying."

She checked herself hastily, and sudden tears filled her bright eyes. Then she went over to the window and looked out upon the bleak little garden.

"How queer it must seem to you," she said, "to see such a dirty scrap of ground as this, and hear us talk of back-parlors and underground kitchens and all the horrors of a third-rate London house."

The tremor in her voice showed that she was saying this merely to cover her emotion, and Estrild, with thoughts of Tristram lying heavy on her heart, found it hard to answer carelessly:

"Oh, I fancy this must be rather a comfortable house!"

"Is it?" replied Mrs. Vicat drily. "You will soon alter that opinion; and you ought not to be here at all—you, who are a grand heiress, and have a splendid mansion, and ——"

But here she stopped suddenly, and bit her lip with vexation at her folly, for Estrild had grown white, and was stretching out her hand towards her as if imploring silence.

"You forget," she said, "what makes me an heiress."

"Yes—for a moment I forgot. And I wish I could forget sometimes to be vulgar, but I can't. There is one comfort—I am always ashamed of myself after I have shown my cloven foot."

"I don't perceive any vulgarity in what you said," observed Estrild kindly.

"Oh, don't you? Can you not see that I was a little envious of you, and angry at my own ugliness, and with our hideous home, and, in fact, with everything?"

"Envious of me?"—and Estrild spoke with astonishment, for she felt herself forlorn, unhappy, stricken by an abnormal and gloomy fate.

"Envious of you?" echoed Carrie. "I should think so—and good cause, too. I am ugly and you are beautiful; I am poor and you are rich. I belong to a vulgar, ill-natured family, and you are descended from an ancient, high-born race, with all sorts of noble traditions."

"No—sorrowful ones that do us harm," interrupted Estrild.

"But you could let them do you good if you liked," resumed the odd girl, "while our vulgar traditions are an unmitigated evil; they knock all poetry out of us; they roll us in the mud and keep us there. In fact, your position is a romantic one, and mine is odiously commonplace. And I am dying to be romantic—that's the truth."

She laughed, and Estrild also laughed a little; and the laugh did them both good. It seemed to give Carrie Vicat more courage; she quitted the window and seated herself on a low stool at Estrild's feet.

"Tell me the truth," she said. "Do you think me dreadfully ugly?"

"I have not thought about your looks," returned Estrild evasively.

"Well, please consider them now, and speak candidly."

"If I do that, I must tell you that I see you think too much of yourself and your misfortunes. Would it not be wiser and happier to think of other things?"

"It certainly would be, both for you and me," said Carrie, with her usual frankness. "But then one is so dreadfully interesting to oneself that it is almost impossible not to feel that one is half the world, and all the house, with the little back-yard and the cobwebs thrown in."

"And who is the other half of the world?" asked Estrild.

"Why, the man one likes to be sure! There—now I have let the cat out of the bag! And isn't it hard for a girl to be in love and know she is ugly, and her hair is the color of a worn-out door-mat, and her relations have turned-up noses, with manners to match? Oh, dear, I am an unfortunate girl!"

"That is only because you think so," said Estrild. "How can you be unfortunate if you are loved?"

Somehow her own words struck upon her heart, and she blushed vividly. Carrie Vicat looked at her with eyes full of light and life.

"Well, you are loved, too, so I have heard; and yet you think yourself very unhappy. That has been told me also, and I have wondered at it. We always wonder at other people's follies, I suppose, and never see our own. Are you really unhappy?"

"I fear I am," said Estrild; and the color rose high into her face. "I have thoughts and feelings respecting my life and duty which you cannot understand."

"Well, if I were in your place, I should soon send them packing. Now, I would give worlds to change fates with you; but you would not change with me."

"No, I own I would not."

"That's conclusive," resumed Carrie, rising abruptly from her low seat. "That proves the value of beauty, and it answers my question as to what you thought of my face."

"But you talk away all thoughts of your face," Estrild expostulated. "Moreover, it had nothing to do with my reply to your foolish questions. No one would give up his or her identity, with all memories, family traditions, and the thousand feelings woven round our hearts, which are the very fibre of our being."

"No—not if all those things made us unhappy?" asked Carrie, with green lights dancing in her eyes.

"No, certainly not; they make our very life."

"And a precious uncomfortable life, too, they make for some of us," returned Carrie. "Nevertheless you speak the truth, and you have done me good."

Good! Estrild blushed again as the word struck her ears. Who was receiving good? Was it possible that this odd, ugly girl was doing her good, undeniably vulgar though she was?

Here Carrie took up the tea-pot and shook it anxiously.

"I think there is another cup in it," she said. "Will you have it?"

"No, thank you."

"Then I'll have it myself, I never throw away good tea; and I have talked my throat dry, too."

She drank her tea to the dregs, and then, with a twist of the hand, spun the cup round two or three times, and peered into it with quite serious eyes.

"I am going to tell my fortune," she said. "It's always close at hand in the cup one brews for oneself. Oh, I see it all here, and I accept it all cheerfully! The turned-up noses, the manners like a penny pocket-handkerchief, with a prize-fighter's countenance on it in blood-red, suggestive ink, and the door-mat hair, and the commonplace lover, who wears ghastly-grand waistcoats, with a good heart, and the odious father, whose creaking boots make tight-ropes for him to dance on, and the ugly little brothers and sisters, who squeak and squeal continually. Poor little mortals, I am very fond of them—they are all here in my cup of tea, which I drink daily?"

"You see a great deal in a few leaves," observed Estrild.

"Oh, there's more yet! Here's a flower in the background—that's you; there's another flower fading in darkness—that's —— Well, you'll see who that is to-morrow. And here's a letter with hasty news."

"How do you know it is hasty?" interposed Estrild.

"The letter has wings," answered Carrie gravely—"that is a sure sign that it is of a most hasty character; and I am afraid it is bad news—there's a black spot in the middle of the letter. And—oh, dear—I am sure Tom has got into trouble! Here's a fight at the bottom of the cup; and after that he goes nearly round the world—such a long, long voyage! Bless me, I don't like my fortune at all; there's something the matter with the tea this evening!"

She looked at Estrild with a sort of comical vexation, half real, half assumed; then a sudden change came over her face, clearing away the shadow.

"I forgot it was your cup," she continued; "that accounts for it. There's some friend of yours going to sea, and I inadvertently dressed him in Tom's waistcoat. Our fates have got mixed you see."

"I see that you are a poor fortune-teller," returned Estrild. "A friend of mine has just come back from a voyage, but he is certainly not going to sea again."

"And he hasn't been fighting of late?"

"No; decidedly not."

"Then it's Tom; and I shall let him know in strong language what I think of his behavior."

"Then I shall tell him that you allow your imagination to run away with your wits."

"You!" exclaimed Carrie, setting down her divining-cup, and staring at Estrild with her bright eyes full of laughing astonishment. "Will you presume to say such a thing?"

"Yes; why not?"

"Now there's a question! And your own imagination is the gloomiest and fastest steed that ever ran away with a poor creature into the wilderness. My imagination amuses me, but yours tears you to pieces. I beg your pardon—I didn't mean to hurt you." And, rushing over to Estrild, she took her hands down from her face and kissed her. "I couldn't help it," she said, almost with tears. "I have heard all about you from my brother; he is half a Carbonellis, you know, and your ideas seem so strange to me. Things in London are so real—such decided bricks and mortar and dirt—that one can't comprehend—— There—I am tiring you to death. Come to your room, and I promise you shall not hear another word from me to-night, or meet a single turn-up nose till to-morrow."

"I shall be glad to go to my room, but I want to write a letter, and—and I should like to send it to the post at once if I possibly could."

"Tom shall take it for you," said Carrie hurriedly. "You may always trust him; but please don't trust any one else. Father would post your letters in his own pocket, and pretend he had forgotten them; and all the others would hand every letter to him if ordered to. There's no one dares be disobedient in the house except me."

"Your father will find that I shall not submit to tyranny or to interference of any kind," Estrild answered, her face flushing as she spoke.

"That's right; and there's always Tom and me in the background to help you."

"And not your brother—my cousin?" asked Estrild.

There was no answer. Carrie stooped and picked up a handkerchief which had fallen to the floor, and rose with a pink flush on her face. Her ugliness seemed to have worn off—she looked almost pretty now.

"The state of Denmark is very rotten," she said, pulling the handkerchief between her fingers; "and there are things in heaven and earth beyond our philosophy; but the strangest of all, to my mind, is the fact that a Carbonellis was induced to marry a Vicat."

Estrild smiled.

"I cannot tell what the inducement was," she replied; "but my aunt ran away with Mr. Vicat."

"Ran away with father?" exclaimed Carrie breathlessly. "How she must have repented! Is it possible that any romance could ever have shed what poets call 'a halo' round father."

"People in love are blind," replied Estrild.

"What a mercy that we are all such bats when we are young! That is why I never see Tom's waistcoats, though they stare me in the face with the loudest of patterns."

"Please let me write my letter in peace," remonstrated Estrild, looking up from the paper.

"Mind you make it nice and kind and loving, so that the other half of your world may be glad to have it."

Estrild wrote rapidly, the color deepening on her cheeks, her hand trembling slightly. It was not the sort of letter she would have deemed it possible to write when she was at Langarth, for it spoke of no parting, but of the joy of union, the happiness of meeting again, the bitterness of her regret that at Salisbury she had given no sign of her presence, and the anguish of the repentance after she had seen the coach depart and knew she had thrown joy away.

"Come to me at once, Harold," she wrote, in conclusion; "for until I see your face—until I hear your voice again—I shall have no peace. I know I have been hard, gloomy, obstinate; but I have also been very ill, and I think you will forgive me when you see how changed I am. Some feelings of mine have changed too. Langarth was full of death and gloom and dark fancies; London is full of life, reality and labor; and the passionate energy of its ceaseless toil quickens my heart with hope. I feel as though happiness were drawing very near to me—am I not in the same city with you? Come to me, Harold—come quickly, for I weary for you more than I can say, and I tremble with the fear of some new misfortune that will separate us again.

She laid down her pen with a quiver on her lips, and with piteous eyes looked up at Carrie's beaming face.

"We fling something precious from us in mistake," she said, "can we have it again for the asking? Can we gather it up again when we will?"

"Not often," returned Carrie. "Opportunities had always better be laid hold of at the right time, for they are very slippery eels, and when once out of our grasp they ain't easy to catch again. There—that's a vulgar smile; but I always talk like a fishwoman, or other creatures of that kind."

"You are not very encouraging," said Estrild, leaning her head on her hand; "and somehow I need a cheerful word, for I have such odd thoughts."

"But you are used to them," said Carrie, with a gleam in her eyes. "The Carbonellises are romantic, and have not good, useful, healthy, housemaid kind of thoughts as they ought to have."

"Have people of that sort all the sense in the world?" asked Estrild. "Are there no poetry, no prophecy, no mysteries of science for higher minds?"

"You are walking over me; please don't trample me down," pleaded Carrie, laughingly; "and don't ask of me more than I can give. You have seen my father and mother—what can you expect of me but the thoroughly commonplace? Now let us be practical; perhaps there is something in your odd thoughts after all, so let's hear them. Is it about your letter?"

"Yes. I have a strange fancy that it will never reach Harold's hands."

"Then I can knock that fancy down at once, for, instead of posting it, Tom shall carry it to him himself."

"Oh, can he do me that kindness?" cried Estrild. "Are you sure he will go himself?"

Carrie looked up in amazement.

"Sure he will go himself?" she repeated. "Is it likely he will refuse to do anything I ask of him? He comes here every evening at half-past nine, and stays till half-past ten; and to-night he will have to forego his snug little tete-a-tete with me in this back-parlor, and go—where is it?"—taking up the letter—"oh, to the Temple. Well, that is not far, and he will be able to bring you back the answer before you are asleep."

"Oh, will he do that? How glad, how happy I shall be if he can."

"He will do it, and in quick time too; and, since he will be here in five minutes ——"

"I will go to my room instantly," interposed Estrild, gathering up her shawls in haste. "You will tell him to take great care with the answer to my letter?"

In her own room Estrild listened for Tom's knock, then again for his retreating footsteps—oh, how long Carrie had kept him!—and with the loud closing of the door her heart trembled, and her fears and hopes fevered every throbbing vein.

To make the slow minutes pass more quickly, she forced occupation upon herself. She strove to read, but knew not what the book was; its words had no meaning, and she was ever looking up from the page listening for a coming step.

At last it came, and she heard hesitation in Carrie's footfall, heard her pause at the door as though unwilling to enter, and felt a chill of fear rush over her like a cold wind.

"Come in!" she cried, with trembling voice. "I have not tried to sleep."

Carrie came to her bedside. With one swift glance she saw there was no letter in her hand.

"Is he ill?" she said, as her face began to grow very white.

"No—do not be frightened—it is only that he is not at his chambers. He left them the same evening that he arrived from some journey. That was many days ago, and he has not returned yet. There—that's all. Tom gave your letter to the woman who looks after his rooms, and she put it on his table, where he would be sure to see it at once."

"But where is he gone?" cried Estrild passionately. "Has he left no word to say?"

"Nothing but this," and Carrie unfolded a scrap of paper that she was hiding in her hand, and laid it before Estrild's eyes. "Tom brought it, thinking it would satisfy your mind a little to see by Mr. Oliver's own words that there is no cause for anxiety in his absence."

"No cause!" and Estrild looked up with dilating eyes from the paper that shook in her hands. "Oh, he is gone again on a mad quest—he is gone again to risk his life to bring me peace. But I care only for him now. Oh, Harold, come back to me, and I will forget Tristram and father and mother and the whole world only to have your arms around me once again!"

"He can't hear you," said Carrie, pitilessly. "Why didn't you say that to him when you had the chance? The wisest thing you can do now is to go to sleep; and when you awake, make up your mind to turn over a new leaf—quite an unromantic, commonplace leaf—and you'll find——"

But Carrie stopped, for Estrild had turned her face to the wall and was weeping bitterly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CARRIE had recommended a trial of the commonplace; and certainly in her home there was every chance of Estrild's essaying the lesson in its utmost hardness and bareness.

The daily life to which she awoke on the first bitter morning of her sojourn was a constant repetition of the same dismal dreariness; for the house was Philistine to the core, unredeemed by a single vivifying grace.

There was favoritism, there was injustice, there were tale-bearing, and tyranny, and fear; and the whole made up a seething mass of petty miseries which rasped the nerves and exasperated the smooth temper of the unhappy girl, whose life hitherto had been full of beauty, harmony, and love.

One voice, one hand only ever seemed able to draw order out of chaos, and peace from confusion. Carrie ubiquitous—defending her mother in that clear, incisive voice which quenched Mr. Vicat's, or quelling disturbance with a soothing hand, or firmly commanding obedience where obedience was due.

Fighting brothers and snapping sisters alike held their peace when Carrie showed them she was in earnest. But for her, life would have been unendurable to Estrild in this household of hideous realities.

Three days passed before she saw the eldest son of the family—the only one who was truly her cousin. He was ill and confined to his room—so Mr. Vicat informed her in the pompous diction so peculiar to him:

"Deeply regretting, I assure you, my dear, that he is obliged to postpone the pleasure of meeting you."

Mrs. Vicat said nothing; she was so completely quenched and subdued in the presence of her husband that, at times, she might have been taken for a dummy, sitting helplessly in a chair, and ready to fall out of place at a touch. When Carrie propped her up, she would show some small sign of life—quickly departing from her when left again to her own defence.

Estrild looked forward to a meeting with her cousin with some hope. He was one of her own race, and she fancied she should find help and sympathy in his companionship. She was doomed to a strange disappointment.

"Gilbert is better: he will see you to-day," Mr. Vicat had said in the morning at breakfast, before departing on his daily visit to the office. "Carrie shall take you to him, my dear; he cannot leave his room yet. Carrie, you hear me? You will take your cousin to Gilbert's room at three o'clock."

"Oh, I hear you," responded Carrie; "but I decline the office! I am going out shopping with mother this afternoon."

Mr. Vicat looked at his refractory females with eyes that blazed, while his head and face seemed to swell visibly with rage—yet he kept silent.

In another moment, however, an occasion presented itself for giving vent to the inward fire that consumed him. One of his small boys, in his effort not to feel frightened, nearly choked himself; and Mr. Vicat instantly seized him, and also the child next him, who had uttered a yell of fear, and carried them both off beneath his arms like an ogre.

Shrieks and sounds of blows followed that turned Estrild faint with horror. She hurriedly attempted to rise, as if to fly; but Carrie clutched her dress, and held her in her chair.

"Show no cowardice," she whispered; "it is what he is looking for in you."

Estrild accepted the warning, and held herself calmly. And, indeed, she was no coward; what she felt was indignation and contempt for the tyrant, and pity for his victims.

"I beg your pardon, Estrild!" said Mr. Vicat, as he returned flushed and with his face scratched. "But discipline is a necessity; and Mrs. Vicat is quite incapable of keeping her children in order: so I am compelled sometimes to be a little severe."

Estrild made no reply, she only pushed her plate aside with her meagre breakfast untouched, and, rising, she went to the window, and looked out on the dreary garden in the square with a bitter sigh for Langarth, and a loud cry in her heart for Harold.

"I have locked those lads in the coal-cellar," continued Mr. Vicat, addressing his wife, "and they are to have no dinner."

"Very well, my dear," said Mrs. Vicat, heaving a meek sigh.

"Then you had better see to their supper and your own, father, when you come back," observed Carrie coolly.

"I am not in the habit of seeing to the children's suppers or my own," returned Mr. Vicat, in his most pompous manner.

"Perhaps you'll break through that habit to-night," responded his daughter, with a malicious little laugh. "People can't always be waited upon; they have to look out for themselves now and then."

Mr. Vicat coughed, and remarked, in a more subdued tone, that it was time he should go to the office.

"And I hope, Estrild, you will not disappoint your cousin of seeing you to-day, although your aunt and Carrie will not be with you."

"I will see him," said Estrild shortly, without turning her head from the window.

By this means, however, she did not escape a parting salutation from her host, who raised his hat in passing the house and gave her one of his odious smiles.

She drew back with feelings at her heart which had never before tormented it—repulsion, defiance, contempt were new emotions, unknown to her in the dear old times when Tristram lived, and Langarth was full of love, and life, and happiness. Now it was desolate, and dead, and empty, and her only home was this sordid and dreadful house.

Harold, too, was gone she knew not whither, and no sign, no word reached her to bring a gleam of comfort to her sad forlornness. And this was her own fault.

In the first cruelty and gloom of her grief she had shrunk from her love, she had fled from his presence; and, even when Fate flung them together, unsought by herself, and without the reproach of a broken promise she might have looked into his face and held his hand in hers, she would not.

She had let him go in blank silence, and never from her lips had he heard one word of thanks, although he had risked his life to bring her peace. Truly she was not undeserving of the pain and suffering laid upon her now.

"Surely," cried Carrie's voice, breaking in upon her reverie with a laugh, "you are not crying for those small urchins? If they did not deserve a whipping to-day, they will to-morrow, when they won't get it. And I have planned a splendid revenge on father. Mother, and Tom, and I are going to the play to-night. You had better come with us."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Estrild, shrinking away with a glance at her deep mourning.

Carrie did not expostulate.

"At least, you will not see Gilbert to-day?" she said. "I advise you to put that visit off till—till a more convenient time."

"No; I should like to see him," Estrild answered.

"'Wilful woman must have her way,'" quoted Carrie. "There is one comfort—he may change his mind, and refuse to see you."

"I don't perceive why that rudeness on his part should bring you comfort," said Mrs. Vicat. "He is queer enough, certainly; but I hope he is not going to be as queer as usual to-day, Mr. Vicat said he was better."

"He'll never be better," returned Carrie shortly. Then she abruptly turned the subject. "Well, mother, you will allow there is comfort in the fact that Tom came back yesterday, and that he has accomplished the business intrusted to him so satisfactorily that his master has given him a holiday?"

"Say his 'employer', my dear; I don't like the word 'master'."

"Say a fiddlestick when the thing is a broom!" retorted Carrie. "All the mischief in the world is done by people not speaking the truth to themselves and to and to each other. Mr. Singleton employs Tom, pays him, and can discharge him—a man who does that is a master. In another twenty years, I dare say, as the world grows so fond of shams, he will be an employer, and his workmen or clerks will be employees, or some such ridiculous name; but meanwhile I call Tom what he is—a clerk—and a good one, too. Estrild, now he is home again, I hope he will bring you news this evening; he promised me he would call at the Temple to inquire for Mr. Oliver."

Estrild flushed painfully, then grew pale; she gave no answer to Carrie beyond a look of thanks.

"I wish, my dear," observed Mrs. Vicat, "that you would not make use of Tom as a

messenger between Estrild and a young man with whom her uncle declines to continue an acquaintance. It will lead to great unpleasantness, and Tom will be forbidden the house."

"Oh, I hope not!" Estrild cried. "Carrie, you must not suffer on my account."

"People suffer just what they choose to suffer," returned Carrie sententiously. "Some like to be martyrs, and some don't. I am one of the last. Nobody is going to run needles into my flesh, I assure you—least of all needles in such a clumsy hand as father's. Now, children, pack, every one of you, and be off to school this very minute!"

"Must Charlie and Fred come too? Will you let them out of the cellar?" piped two or three voices at once.

"Don't ask questions. They are too black by this time to go school."

"Father put the key of the cellar in his his pocket," said one boy triumphantly; "and I've got Fred's marbles and shall keep 'em all day now."

"You'll give them up to me," said Carrie, seizing the urchin with a vigorous hand, while she emptied his pockets with the other. "Now here's your hat—tramp at once, and don't cry, or, instead of joining Fred in the cellar, you'll be put down the sink in the back kitchen."

A clatter of boots, a discordant chorus of voices, a scuffle in the passage, and then a heavy slam of the front door, and after this a lull of silence. Then Carrie returned from the struggle flushed, but with eyes full of fun and glee.

"How we shall enjoy ourselves to-day!" she cried breathlessly.

"Shall we?" said her mother with a great sigh. "The kitchen fire is nearly out by this time for want of coal."

"I am delighted to hear it; things will be so comfortable for father in the evening, when he comes home."

"We must send for the blacksmith and get the lock off, I suppose," rejoined Mrs. Vicat, ignoring this remark with a scared look in her eyes."

"No, mother; we won't do anything of the kind. We'll dine out with Tom, and give the cook a holiday till ten p. m.," and turning a deaf ear to all expostulation, Carrie ran off laughing.

Mrs. Vicat, on the verge of tears, turned to Estrild.

"Mr. Vicat is so savage if kept waiting for dinner," she said. "I'm sure I don't know what will happen if he gets nothing to eat till past ten o'clock. And the boys too will be half dead of cold and hunger and darkness by that time."

Here a shout arose from outside the house, and Mrs. Vicat roused herself from her apathy, and drew near the window to ascertain the cause for the shrill hurrahs that pierced the air.

A crowd of urchins and loafers stood on the pavement, watching with immense glee the drawing up by ropes through the cellar opening of two very small blackened boys, whose faces, expanded now by laughter, were begrimed with dirt and tears.

"That's just like Carrie," exclaimed Mrs. Vicat—"exposing us to the ridicule of the neighborhood, and never needing appearances in the least! There—she is positively kissing those boys before everybody, and they both as black as sweeps! And the dirty crowd cheering her, too! What will Mr. Vicat say? If this scene ever comes to his knowledge, I am sure I shall have cause to wish myself in heaven!"

CHAPTER XXX.

JOE had scarcely uttered his words of warning ere the tramp of many feet followed him, and Daniel and Harold found themselves confronted by that most formidable and cruel tyranny of the times—a press-gang.

The men composing came forward with a rush, and with an adroitness that showed they were well used to their vile work, they so surrounded their victims that escape was impossible.

"Resistance is useless, and will be punished severely," cried the leader of the gang. "As seaman, you know the service well enough to know that; so you had better yield without making a fight for it."

"This gentleman is not a seaman," said Daniel; "he is a barrister."

"He looks like one," retorted the warrant-officer with a laugh. "I happen to know he is a deserter from his Majesty's ship the 'Billy-rough-un.'"

"You are mistaken," observed Harold, stepping nearer to the lamp, and still holding his prisoner. "I have no objections to give my name and address."

A burst of laughter followed this proposition, and a man who had hitherto hung back pushed forward now to the light.

"You had better drop that game!" he said to Harold, with an oath. "I saw you to-day in a boat by the Temple stairs, and spotted you at once as the man I had been told to look out for."

"Your eyes don't see straight," returned Daniel; "this is not the same man."

"If it isn't him, it's another who will do as well," retorted the petty officer, with a short laugh.

"I tell you it's the same!" cried the informer, whom Daniel and Harold had now recognised as the man whose boat had followed theirs from the Temple. "Do you think I don't know his toggery? Where did you buy your hat Billy Ruffian?"

"It was bought in a civiller place than you come from," said Joe angrily.

"Youngster, if you don't want your head knocked off, you had better keep a civil tongue in it," observed the captain of the gang. "Now, men, march with your prisoners!"

"If you please, sir," cried Trevel, struggling fiercely now in Harold's grasp, "I've been laid hold of by these men, who are smugglers, and dragged away from my decent lodgings and made to jine 'em by force! I hope, sir, you'll let me go—I'm no sailor."

"So you are a d——d set of smugglers, are you?" said the leader. "Well, you won't make worse seamen for that. Let that fellow go—we don't want him; we'll press the boy instead."

"I don't let that man go," said Harold, "while there is life in me to hold him. It is your duty to take him prisoner. He is a seaman, and a deserter from the 'Alert'."

A look passed between Trevel and the ruffian of the river, a touch on the palm suggested the passing of coin, and the informer called out:

"Look here, cap'n—will you take the word of a smuggler to a lie? That's a decent chap he's holding. I know him well enough—he gets his living on the river as a bargeman; he's exempt by the law."

"Let the man go; it's you who are the deserter!" shouted the officer hoarsely to Harold. "Lies don't pass with me."

"Take the word of that villain instead of mine at your peril!" exclaimed Harold. "I repeat, he is a deserter from the 'Alert', and I have seized him because he is worse—he is an assassin! Daniel Pascoe, who is a pilot—a man you have no right to touch, for he commands his own boat the 'Curlew'—will give you the same account of this man that I do."

"Pilot be d——d!" cried the sea-ruffian in answer. "Take your hands off the man, or——"

"Hold on to him, Daniel," said Harold quietly.

"Handcuff them both!" cried the officer angrily.

There were a sudden rush and a fierce struggle, in which all were carried forward down the narrow sloping passage towards the river.

During the onslaught of the men and the fight that followed, Harold never once relaxed his hold of Trevel; he could, therefore, defend himself only with one hand; but, in the darkness of that narrow place, friend mistook friend for foe, and blows were so indiscriminately given that he was not directly attacked, but only pushed forward with the rest to the shore.

Here the stars and their gleam, which shone on the water, gave light enough to enable him to understand why Trevel had been uttering yell upon yell, and why, also, he had allowed himself to be borne along without resistance.

Lion had hold of him by the leg, and it was only by allowing himself to be dragged onwards like a log that he saved his flesh from a fierce grip of those masterful teeth. But now, in the light by the river, he shouted for help.

"Shoot the dog—shoot the dog—he's killing the man!" cried the crimp, rushing forward pistol in hand.

"Hold the man yourselves!" exclaimed Harold to the gang, "and I'll call off my dog! He is not hurting the fellow. You may handcuff me twice over, so you take him prisoner also."

His words were unheeded. Two or three pistols were levelled at Lion's head, but as it was impossible to shoot him without wounding Trevel, the men who held them hesitated to fire.

Meanwhile Harold and Daniel both struggled hotly to save the dog and yet retain the man for whose seizure they had risked their lives.

But their captors were too strong for them; knocked down, brutally belabored with blows, and their expostulations treated with contempt, they could but remain helpless spectators of the fray.

"Shoot the brute!" shouted the leader of the press-gang again, with a tremendous oath; and then, as he was not instantly obeyed, he drew forth his own pistol, and beside himself with rage, fired indiscriminately.

As the report rang through the air, Trevel fell to the ground wounded, uttering a heavy groan; but Lion, unhurt, still held him, and no one dared to drag him away, or attempt to shoot him in the face of Trevel's agonized cries not to fire.

At a word from Harold the dog would have let go his hold; but breathless from his long fight, exasperated, and burning still with the resolve to hold Trevel at all hazards, he would not speak.

In another instant he regretted his silence with fresh agony; for the crimp, stealing up silently, kicked Lion with brutal force, and the dog, turning instantly, sprang on him without a sound.

"Lion—let go!" Harold shouted; but his command came too late.

In the shock of the dog's sudden onslaught, the crimp stepped backwards, slipped, and without a cry fell with a heavy splash into the river. At the same instant the crack of pistols sounded through the air, and Harold saw Lion stretched on the ground panting and bleeding.

His heart bounded against his side as he beheld this sight, and the rush of anger and grief in his veins brought a smart to his eyes like the touch of fire; he took no heed of the attempts made to rescue the crimp, who had sunk to rise no more; but in the midst of the confusion, the noise of oaths and shouting, he felt the touch of Lion's tongue on his manacled hands.

Wounded and dying, the dog had crept to his master for the reward of a caress, believing he had done his duty. Then Harold stooped over him, and for one instant held him closely against his side; the next moment one of the men who guarded him had put a bullet through Lion's brain, and he fell dead with his master's arm still around him.

"He's out of his pain," said the man, with a laugh, as he wiped his pistol.

The gallant spirit was out of him—the life lived so well was gone; and it was but the reward of valor, in the beginning of this century, to be wounded, to die, and to be flung into an unknown grave.

* * * * * *

Harold had one intense satisfaction as the tender into which he, and Daniel, and Joe were thrust sailed down the Thames—he knew that the leader of the press-gang had taken Trevel with them.

The miseries of the voyage to Sheerness, and the horrors of the night in the hold of the frigate which awaited them there, need not be told. In darkness and in irons Harold and his companions felt the heavings of the great ship as the wind filled her sails and she swung round like a living leviathan and dashed out sea.

"Daniel, whither are we bound?" asked the young man, in a low voice.

"The Lord knows, Mr. Oliver! But I heard the men saying some'ut about convoying a fleet of merchantmen; so I reckon India is the place."

"Daniel, I am sorry, indeed, I have led you into this mess."

"There's no need to fret, Mr. Oliver. You and I needn't go to India unless we've a mind to."

"I know well enough they can't make a sailor of me," returned Harold; "and, if I can once get speech with a commissioned officer, I shall doubtless be listened to and set free; but I am not going to leave you in the lurch, Daniel; neither will I leave the ship while the man Trevel has breath in him and there is any hope of wringing the truth out of his black soul."

"You would not be leaving me in the lurch, Mr. Oliver. I mean to go ashore at Falmouth—never you mind how I shall manage it. I am sartain sure of it—that's all. So, when they bring us afore the cap'n don't you trouble over me, but tell him plain out who you are, and demand to be put ashore at Portsmouth. But, as for you, my sonny boy"—and Daniel turned to poor Joe, who was sobbing audibly—"I am afeard you must take the press-money, and fight the French like a man."

"Don't you grieve about him, Daniel; I will look after him when you are gone."

"You, Mr. Oliver! Why, surely you don't mean——"

"Yes; I mean what I say, Daniel. I don't leave this ship while Trevel is in it."

"Mr. Oliver, I reckon you'd better stalp 'pon that saying; and, though planks be a hard bed, the sea is a good rocking-cradle, and the tired head finds a pillow wherever it rests. Good night to 'ee, sir!"

And in the silence that followed Harold's harassed thoughts gradually grew calmer, till a dream of Langarth swept them into slumber with a vision of Estrild's face leaning over him with eyes full of love.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

DIFFERENT COLORS.—Farmers in Mexico always use oxen of one color in the morning, and oxen of another color in the afternoon. They do not know why, but know that it must be the right thing to do, because their forefathers did it.

EXERCISE FOR THE TONGUE.—The following short sentences do wonders in baffling the ordinary powers of speech. They must be spoken very fast: Gaze on the gay gray brigade. The sea cooseth, and it sufficeth us. Say, should such a shapely sash shabby stitches show? Strange strategic statistics. Give Grimes Jim's great gilt gig whip. Sarah in a shawl shoveled soft snow slowly. She sells sea shells. A cup of coffee in a copper coffee cup. Smith's spirit flask split Philip's sixth sister's fifth squirrel's skull. Mr. Fish wished to whisk whisky.

THE MASQUERADERS.—The singular custom at this season, of patrolling the streets from nightfall to daybreak, originated in the belief that hogoblins and spirits were abroad, and that witches had more power on this night than on any other; and, as all things evil were said to shun the light, the warding them off by means of fires, and lamps, and glaring crowsets, was but another form of the old Druidical one of purifying habitations and individuals from such influences by making circles of fire around them, or walking round them with lighted brands.

THE PURITAN CHRISTMAS.—It is only about 256 years ago that the first Thanksgiving Day was observed in this country. Old Massasoit and his ninety braves sat down to dinner with the long-faced Puritans. The Indians brought deer from the woods, and the palefaces supplied fish, clams, and corn. Ten years later, when the last batch of bread in the colony was in Governor Bradford's oven, and starvation was staring our New England ancestors in the face, a good ship from Ireland appeared with provisions, and the day appointed for fasting was changed into a day of thanksgiving.

CHIMNEYS.—In the year 1200 chimneys were scarcely known in England; only one was allowed in a religious house, one in a manor house, and one in the great hall of a castle or lord's house; but in other houses the smoke found its way out as it could. The writers of the fourteenth century seemed to have considered them as the newest invention of luxury. In Henry the Eighth's reign the University of Oxford had no fire allowed; for it is mentioned that after the student had supped, having no fire in winter, they were obliged to take a good run for half an hour, to get heat in their feet before they retired for the night.

A BARBAR BIRD.—In Demerara, in South America, there is a bird which the natives call Houtou, but which we know as the motmot. It has the strange habit of trimming its tail, an operation which is much the same, so it is believed, as having one's hair cut in a barber shop. The houtou's bill has a saw-like edge, by means of which the trimming is done. As soon as the tail is fully grown the bird begins, about an inch from the end of the two longest feathers it, to cut away the web on each side of the shaft, leaving a gap about an inch long. Both male and female treat their tales in this way, and doubtless it is one of the fashions of the bird world of Demerara.

IN THE ANIMAL WORLD.—It is worthy of note that the cock is not the only member of the animal creation whose natural instinct has, it is said, taught it to do honor to Christmas night. At Aberaven, in Monmouthshire, England, for instance, there formerly existed a superstition that every Christmas morning, and then only, a large salmon exhibited himself in the adjoining river, and permitted himself to be handled or taken up, although it would have been regarded as the height of impiety to capture it. The author of "Sketches of Upper Canada", relates how he met an Indian at midnight, on Christmas Eve, during a beautiful moonlight, cautiously creeping along, and beckoning him to silence, saying at the same time: "Me watch to see the deer kneel; this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit, and look up."

A PREACHER in Fleming county, Ky., borrowed a suit of clothes to wear while baptizing a convert. Somewhere in the suit there was a deck of cards which the owner forgot to take, and while the parson and his convert were in the water the cards began to float around them, to the amazement of the spectators.

IF WE KNEW.

If we knew the cares and crosses
Crowded round our neighbor's way;
If we knew the little losses
Surely grievous day by day,
Would we then so often chide him
For the lack of thrift and gain—
Leaving on his heart a shadow,
Leaving on our hearts a stain?

If we knew that cloud above us,
Held by gentle blessings there,
Would we turn away all trembling,
In our blind and weak despair?
Would we shrink from little shadows,
Lying on the dewy grass,
While 'tis only birds of Eden,
Just in mercy flying past?

If we knew the silent story
Quivering through the heart of pain,
Would our womanhood dare doom them
Back to haunts of vice and shame?
Life has many a tangled crossing,
Joy has many a break of woe,
And the cheeks fear-washed are whitest,
This the blessed angels know.

Let us reach within our bosoms
For the key to other lives,
And with love to erring Nature,
Cherish good that still survives;
So that when our disrobed spirits
Soar to realms of light again,
We may say, dear Father, judge us
As we judge our fellow-men.

Pride For Pride.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CUPID IN SCARLET," "NINE PEAS IN A POD," "PRIDE," "THE GHOST OF AN OLD LOVE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VI.—(CONTINUED.)

Oh, dear, yes! She married me out of pure compassion and to save the estate. She doesn't care that for me"—snapping his fingers softly.

"Does not care for you?" the little woman cried in incredulous accents, and opening the blue eyes very wide indeed. "Then is there some one else?"

"Oh, no!"—with a laugh. "Mrs. a-Dale is above all that nonsense."

"With those eyes?" she said scornfully, forgetting that she had been immensely surprised and upset at meeting Alan so unexpectedly. "Pooh, Alan! Those eyes are capable of a great deal—she has not them for nothing."

"Why, where did you see her?"

"Oh, I passed her in the hall this afternoon!" she answered, with some confusion. "She is very distinguished-looking."

"Yes, all the Athelstanes are."

"Ah! Yes; I have heard that they are great, great people. I knew Alaric Athelstane at Aldershot. He gave me to understand that his family was very good. And yet she does not care for you? Oh, it is impossible!" — with considerable emphasis.

At that particular moment Alan would have given a good deal if he could have said truthfully that his wife did care for him; however, whatever other faults he possessed, he did not come under the ban of untruthfulness; therefore he gave his little temptress a straightforward answer, like the straightforward honorable man he was.

"On the contrary, I believe my wife likes me very much. We have always been the closest friends, from the time that we were little children together and could scarcely toddle. What I meant to imply is that we are not what is called 'in love' with each other. You said that you passed her this afternoon: we are expecting a friend to dine with us at seven; my wife will be delighted if you and Major Fane will join us. I need not tell you"—speaking a little more softly, and without the hauteur which had unconsciously leapt into his voice as he spoke of Lu-Lu—"how glad I shall be if you will."

Mrs. Fane hesitated a moment; she more than doubted Mrs. a-Dale's probable delight should she make Ned accept the invitation.

Like most little women, she was quick-witted, and she had been very keen to notice the flash of scorn in Lu-Lu's dark eyes as they met her own.

"Yes, I should like," she began, with a sigh.

"Then do come," he urged eagerly. "At all events, I shall order covers and expect you."

"I will hear what Ned says," she said at last; with which absurd piece of affectation she tripped on her errand below.

Having watched her out of sight, Alan a-Dale went on his way, and, opening the door of their sitting-room, found Lu-Lu in the depths of an arm-chair, with a book in her hand. She raised her head as he entered.

"I say, old girl," he began, "whom do you think I met on the stairs just now?"

"How should I know, Alan?"

"Georgie Fane—Mrs. Fane, you know her."

"And who is she?"

"Mrs. Fane—the girl whose photograph you saw this morning. By-the-bye, you must have seen her. She said she passed you in the hall."

"I passed a vulgar over-dressed little woman in the hall as I went out," returned Lu-Lu coolly. "That couldn't be Mrs. Fane."

"But it was," Alan answered, feeling all at once somehow that Lu-Lu was right, and that Georgie was both vulgar and over-dressed.

Lu-Lu laughed gaily, more real laughter than had passed her lips for some time.

"Then you ought to be thankful, Alan," she said, "that a kind Providence has given you an Athelstane for a wife, instead of a person who walks on foot in a costume of grass-green velvet and peacocks' feathers."

"They are coming in to dinner," he announced, half apologetically. "I hope you don't mind. It isn't as if you cared, you know."

"No, exactly! Had you not better be thinking of dressing?" she asked quietly. "I am already dressed"—rising and standing before him, a tall and elegant figure in black and amber. "I am afraid, Alan, that Mrs. Fane will think your wife a dowdy. Her taste in dress seems to be pronounced."

* * * * * *

It was with a decidedly uncomfortable sensations that Alan a-Dale went to greet the guests whom he had invited.

His first glance was at Mrs. Fane's costume, which, happily, was an absolutely irreproachable combination of the most delicate tints of gray, pink, and blue; the three shades of color were so cunningly blended that the effect of the whole was subdued in the extreme.

Alan did not know it; but it was the flash of scorn in his wife's dark eyes that had induced little Mrs. Fane to choose the costume of the most low-toned character which she possessed.

He did not know that half an hour previously there had been sundry additions in the shape of scarlet and gold fringe curiously blended, which had transformed the garment from a combination of cold tones into one of really barbaric splendor, but which had fallen before the scissors, and now lay, a heap of dazzling richness, on the little woman's bed.

"Doesn't look quite so 'loud' in the evening," thought Lu-Lu, as she moved forward.

"So charmed to make your acquaintance," said Mrs. Fane, in the most gushing accents. "Your husband was a great friend of ours when we were quartered at York. I must congratulate you a thousand times."

"Thank you," Lu-Lu responded civilly, turning from her to the Major who said very little, but looked a great deal—in fact, he looked things so unutterable that, to escape from the gaze of his bold gray eyes, she turned back again towards the wife. "You came to-day?" she asked.

"Yes, from Colchester. We often run up for a day or two. We saw you in the hall this afternoon."

"Oh, yes!" said Lu-Lu, in a tone neither of assent nor, indeed, of any other expression.

Mrs. Fane looked at Alan in despair, wondering if she would have to spend all the evening making conversation with this tall, haughty young woman, who did not appear to have a word to say?

But Alan was talking to Mr. Wrottenhall, and did not see her; and, when she looked at Ned, with a like expression, he was standing staring at Lu-Lu with a gaze which positively looked fascinated.

"Whatever does he see in her?" said the little woman to herself, with an inward groan.

However, no matter what Major Fane could and Alan could not see in Lu-Lu, Mrs. Fane felt it would never do to sit there mumchance like two wooden dummies in a bonnet-maker's show-room.

Something she must say, and that very quickly.

That Mrs. a-Dale would not help out with it was very evident, for she was sitting in graceful ease looking at nothing in particular, her slim hands carelessly folded, and, as Georgie particularly noticed, devoid of ornament save for her wedding-ring and a single diamond of great lustre.

She looked down upon her own small, fat be-ringed hands, and wished she could slip a few of them off into her pocket. She wondered impatiently what possessed her to wear so many.

There was the great half-hoop of rubies that Ned had given her ten years before; one of diamonds, which had followed—above that, a much larger one of the same costly gems, which poor Alan had begged her to accept as a souvenir, the last time they met under the elm-trees in the gardens at York.

That large sapphire poor Jack Cholmondeley had sent her the night before he went out to the Gold Coast.

Poor Jack! He died at Coomassie three months afterwards, with a bullet through his lungs, and she had worn the sapphire on her finger ever since.

Poor Jack! If, among all the men who had sunned or scorched themselves in the fire of her blue eyes, she had cast a regret after one, it lay with the dark-eyed handsome lad in his African grave.

She gave a little sigh then to his gallant memory, a sigh mingled with a feeling that, after all, it was perhaps as well that he had never come back.

And then there was the heavy gipsy-ring next to it, set with a cat's-eye and two diamonds, one she had admired on Alaric Athelstane's hand and tried on her own, with a complete forgetfulness to return it which had cost her Alaric's friendship, and about which she could never think without a blush.

"I think you knew my brother," remarked Lu-Lu at that moment.

Mrs. Fane looked up with a positive gasp. Could it be that his sister had any remembrance of the ring?

For her very life she could not have stopped the tide of deepest crimson which flooded through the scarlet of her rouge and answered Lu-Lu's question as plainly as words could have done.

"Yes, if Mr. Alaric Athelstane of the Ninth is your brother," she stammered.

"Yes—there is only one family of Athelstanes," said Lu-Lu, with her fine smile. "If I remember rightly, you were at Aldershot together some time ago?"

"Yes," responded Mrs. Fane, laying her hand over the cat's-eye and furtively turning the ring round, with an inward resolve never to wear it again.

"I'll have some other stone put in to-morrow," she thought. "I dare say they will give me good exchange for it—if not, I'll have it mounted as a pin for Ned."

She was a frugal little body, all things considered.

In the meantime Lu-Lu continued, speaking with pleasant placidity—she felt she could afford to be gracious, having discovered, by the vividness of that blush, that there was, or had been, something between Alaric and Major Fane's wife.

"There was some great joke about a photograph," she said, thawing a great deal. "I almost forget quite what—we hear so many 'good jokes' from Alaric."

By this time they had moved to the table, which was a round one and not very large, so that the conversation was necessarily general.

"A very small joke raises a laugh in a regiment," interposed Major Fane quietly. "Take it all round, the life is rather monotonous."

"Oh, I should think so!" Lu-Lu answered. "We have some friends in your regiment—the Trevors. They are quite tired of it."

"I believe they are."

"What a handsome woman Mrs. Trevor is!" remarked Mr. Wrottenhall, joining in the conversation for the first time.

"So I think," said Lu-Lu.

"She has eyes just like a cat," laughed Alan—"and who could admire a cat's eye?"

"Many people. How awfully fashionable those stones have become!" observed Wrottenhall innocently, thinking the while that the pretty little woman opposite looked uncommonly hot.

"They are so very expensive too!" added Lu-Lu, with equal innocence. "I wanted one dreadfully a short time ago. Alaric had a beauty, and I tried very hard to beg it of him. He was inexorable, though—it was a present to him—and my blandishments were all in vain."

"And you did not get it?" Wrottenhall asked.

"I did not. No; the last time he was at home—for our wedding, in fact—he asked what I would have for a present, and I hinted at the ring, for he had ceased to wear it."

"But you didn't get it?" Alan laughed aloud.

"No. He actually had the audacity to tell me he had lost it; but he was very good, for he is going to buy me a fine one as soon as he is in town."

"Mrs. Fane," said Alan suddenly, "you used to wear a fine one. Have you it to-night?"

Now the little woman's first impulse was to say "No;" but, unfortunately, she was by no means sure that Lu-Lu's keen observant eyes had not marked the stone, so she was in a manner compelled to take it off her finger and hand it round for inspection.

Poor little soul! It was a mauvais quart d'heure for her, and her agony reached a climax when, the ring having passed from Alan to his friend, Lu-Lu in turn took it daintily between her finger and thumb and examined it.

"It is a very beautiful stone," observed Mrs. a-Dale, with considerable deliberation. "Alaric's was set with diamonds—in this way exactly. I cannot tell"—holding the ring a little way off and moving it so as to catch the light—"I cannot tell how experts dare swear so positively to a certain jewel. They say a lapidary always knows a stone which has once passed through his hands. Now this ring to me looks just like Alaric's. If I should ever be so unlucky as to lose a jewel, I shall remember yours, Mrs. Fane, and be careful what I swear to"—handing it back to her. "It is a lovely ring—you must indeed be proud of it."

"I am," said the little woman, with a great feeling of thankfulness, which would scarcely have been so great if she could have looked over Mrs. a-Dale's shoulder a few hours later.

"My dear Alaric," she wrote—"I wish to know anything you can tell me concerning a Mrs. Fane, wife of the Major of the 15th Lancers. Is she the woman you told us about, and had she anything to do with the loss of your cat's-eye? I am not, believe me, asking from idle curiosity. On your answer to me hangs the issue of my life's happiness. Please, dear Alaric, do not let your reticence disappoint me. In great haste, Your loving sister, 'Lu-Lu.'"

She folded it hurriedly, and asked Alan to ring the bell as she directed it.

"Post that letter at once, please," she said to the servant who answered the summons.

"Writing home?" Alan asked carelessly.

"No; to Alaric."

She vouchsafed no further explanation, and Alan never dreamed of asking any; it was a part of their compact, or, to speak quite correctly, of his, that one should in no way interfere with the actions and liberty of the other.

She rose, having finished her letter, and went and stood before him on the hearth-rug, looking into the fire, with eyes which he thought dreamy, but which were, in truth, coldly, deeply calculating.

"How did you like her?" he asked presently. "Pretty little woman, isn't she?"

"Oh, very pretty!" Lu-Lu answered, with somewhat of a start. "Not much style, though—no ease of manner—the kind of a woman that would get on best with men."

"No style!" Alan echoed. "Oh, I don't agree with you!"

"Of course not," Lu-Lu returned, with a laugh which sounded pleasant, though the pain at her heart was agonising. "Her husband is very good-looking."

"Fane good-looking!" cried Alan, as if he could not believe his ears. "My dear Lu, you must be joking. Good-looking! Oh, by Jove, I like that! I never could tell what induced Georgie to marry the ugly, ill-conditioned brute."

Lu-Lu had dropped into a chair, which happily for her was of the rocking order. She sat coolly swaying backwards and forwards as if the subject under discussion were a picture or a race-horse.

"Well, my friend, I must beg leave to differ with you—no man or woman would be ugly with eyes like those."

"I didn't know you liked grey-green eyes," returned Alan rather forlornly.

"Grey-green? What a horrid way of putting it!" she laughed. "My dear Alan, I do not think I ever expressed any admiration for any particular class of eyes. I like all handsome eyes. I like yours."

"Mine?" cried Alan.

"You have beautiful eyes," said the girl quietly.

She spoke as coolly and quietly as if the matter were utterly indifferent to her; the very vainest man that ever lived could not have felt complimented by the tone—it was a simple statement of fact, nothing more.

"I have asked them to come down to Crowsmount for a fortnight," he said abruptly.

Any one watching her might have noticed that the movements of the chair were slightly more uncertain and energetic, but she kept her face well under control as she replied.

"Oh, have you? It will be very nice!"

"You don't mind?" he asked anxiously. "I cannot have you annoyed in any way. They can easily be put off. In fact, it was she who reminded me of an old promise that they should come to Crowsmount as soon as I was married. Faith, when I made it, I never thought it would be brought to pass!"

"There's many a true word spoken in jest," Lu-Lu remarked drily. "There is no occasion to speak of putting them off. I shall be charmed to see them. I will add my invitation to yours to-morrow."

She spoke in all sincerity; into her quick mind came a sudden inspiration that, under her own roof and with Alaric's help, if she could get it, she would be more able to find out little Mrs. Georgie's delinquencies than in any other circumstances.

Unfortunately Alan, as usual, mistook her tone.

"How she has grown to hate me!" he said within himself. "It isn't as if you cared," he said aloud, and in a tone of decided apology.

Two days later Alaric's reply reached her and she tore it open eagerly.

"Dearest Lu-Lu," it began—"Of course I shall be very glad to tell you everything I know about Mrs. Fane. Her husband's regiment was at Aldershot at the same time as ours, and I met Mrs. Fane soon after I went back from the first long leave I had from that place. I thought her rather a nice little woman—awfully bad form and all that, but still nice enough to do a mild flirtation with; nearly all the young fellows in the place were on the same terms with her. I had known her some months, when one day we were talking of rings, and she expressed a great admiration for the cat's-eye which you mention.

"'Let me try it on, Mr. Athelstane,' she said, in that coaxing way of hers. So, of course, I pulled the ring off and handed it to her. Now—would you believe it?—the little thief kept it—swore I'd given it to her, and she made a rule of never giving souvenirs away. As you may imagine, I cut her forthwith. Now, my dear old Lu, that is the entire truth. For your own sake, I hope you have in no way got mixed up with that woman; she is neither more nor less than *a low little cad*. There—it isn't often I underline words, is it? If you should happen to get thrown together, keep a sharp look-out upon her intercourse with Alan—your family jewels won't be safe. Fane is a very decent chap—first-rate soldier. I wonder he allowed himself to be taken in by such a little cat.

"You don't mention Alan, nor how you are getting on with your absurd views. I daresay by this time they have exploded. For both your dear old sakes, I hope so.

"Ever yours,
"ALARIC ATHELSTANE."

Immediately Lu-Lu put the letter into Alan's hand—she watched his face closely as he read it—she saw surprise, anger, and shame sweep over his countenance in rapid succession; then he folded the letter, replaced it in its envelope, and gave it to her in silence.

"Well?" she said drily.

"I don't believe a word of it," he replied.

"You forget that you have Alaric's word for it, Alan," said Lu-Lu coldly. "The Athelstanes do not tell falsehoods. Besides, I recognized the ring—and the inscription."

"The inscription?" he repeated.

Lu-Lu bent her head in acquiescence.

"That ring was given to Alaric in peculiar circumstances. Colonel Hellier's only child—a boy about six years old—being left alone in his nursery, set his little frock on fire. Alaric had come to call on Mrs. Hellier, and, hearing the child shriek, as he passed across the hall, reached in, found him in flames, and, catching up a rug that was lying near, managed to extinguish them, not however before the child was severely burnt. A long illness followed; and at last he recovered; and doctors, one and all, declared that his life was saved owing to Alaric's presence of mind. It was in return for this that the Helliers gave Alaric the cat's-eye ring, and the inscription is—'In gratitude—Dec. 4, 18—.' If you had looked inside the ring, you would have seen it."

"I did see it," he said, in a very low voice.

"Then do you think it possible—probable—that he would ever willingly have parted with such a gift?"

"No, I do not," he acknowledged—then held out his hand. "Let us be at peace, Lu. I own I have been a dunce—an awful dunce. Let us be friends."

"Let us be friends," Lu-Lu answered; but, if her heart had spoken, she would not have said friends, but lovers.

She had found Mrs. Georgie out, and she had so completely proved her case that Alan proposed they should return to Crowsmount at once, and never seemed to think of going to bid good-bye to the woman he had once fancied himself in love with.

At the end of their honeymoon trip, the a-Dale-Athelstane alliance seemed as near complete failure as possible—only that letter of Alaric's intervened and set the compact friendship on its legs again.

So a few weeks dragged by—weeks spent in vociferous welcomes, triumphal arches, balls, and dinners, and other gaiety; and at last it began to show signs of giving way again.

Each was convinced that the other was utterly indifferent, if not moved by feelings of actual dislike.

Each was too proud to let the other see that such was not the case, and so the game was played on.

After the first few weeks they were much alone at Crowsmount, for the Athelstanes had temporarily deserted Saxongore; but they were not much together.

Between them had risen up slowly and imperceptibly a strong wall of pride and reserve.

They met at meals, which were for the most part eaten in silence; but otherwise Alan went his way, and Lu-Lu—well, she stayed where he had left her.

She went out very little, but spent most of her time in the quaint old gardens, thinking for the most part of the day which was, she felt convinced, not far distant, when she should no longer hear the song of the birds, no longer feel the warmth of the blessed sunshine, no longer be vexed with the pain of averted eyes and chill silence, when Alan would put her to sleep—gently, if without much sorrow—in the great family vault in the church.

For the most part her thoughts wandered thus, though there was not the slightest sign of their being brought to pass for many years to come.

The summer slipped away, and Alan spoke of going to Norway for salmon-fishing, and Lu-Lu began feverishly to wish that he would; a sickly idea had taken possession of her, that she would be able to fade away comfortably during his absence.

But the days sped on, and still he did not go off.

First he waited for the return of the family to Saxongore, then the double wedding came off, and he had to wait for that event also, not possessing sufficient courage to propose absenting himself on such an auspicious occasion.

It happened, one lovely sunny morning towards the end of September, that Lu-Lu was sitting at the open window of her room, feeling more weary of life than usual.

She was gazing at the blue distant wolds, and thinking that by another year she would be sleeping that quiet and tranquil slumber in which such matters as love and sorrow, blue wolds, and ancestral acres will have no place, when the door was hurriedly opened, and Alan entered.

Lu-Lu looked up in amazement—not for many weeks had he crossed the threshold of this her sanctum.

She saw that in his hand, which was trembling violently, he held a paper, and that his eyes were wet with tears.

"Look at this, Lu," he said. "Of course it makes no difference now, and we must let the other stand; but to find, after all, that the dear old man did trust me is awfully gratifying! And to think how I railed at him and abused him—he who did everything for me—ah, I can't bear to think of it!"

Lu-Lu was gazing at the paper with horrified eyes—it was neither more nor less than a will, dated a few days before old Alan a-Dale's death, in which, with the exception of a few legacies, he left all to his nephew without restriction of any kind.

All this time it had lain in a pocket-book in a private drawer, and, being written entirely in his own hand, no one had known of its existence.

As for the witnesses, they had witnessed the Squire's signature without having any idea of the nature of the paper.

"Oh, it is too cruel—too cruel!" she sobbed, covering her face with her hands.

Alan staggered away from her like a man who has received a blow, and his wife sobbed on.

"Let me go away," she cried passionately. "I cannot bear it any longer!"

"Go away!" he echoed.

"Yes—whilst I felt I had given you Crowsmount, I bore it," she said indistinctly, through her sobs. "Now—you'll hate me worse than ever."

Alan only caught one or two of the words.

"Don't say you hate me so badly as that, old woman," he cried very imploringly; "for Heaven's sake don't talk of leaving me!"

Lu-Lu raised her head.

"Why, would it hurt you if I went away? Do you mean to say you do not regret our marriage now more bitterly than ever?"

"Regret? I have never regretted it," he answered. "I admit I did make a frightful dunce of myself over Fane's wife; but I believe it was more pig-headed obstinacy than anything else. I was so angry that uncle Alan left such a will. I've been miserable lately, Lu-Lu—I have indeed. Somehow you seemed to hate me so, and, as I had got to love you, just as I did when we were youngsters——"

"I hate—you?" Lu-Lu cried. "When was the time that I did not adore you?"

"Adore me—you?" he repeated. "What—all along? Why didn't you say so?"

Lu-Lu hung her head.

"I believe I was too proud, so I pretended I did not—but did all the time."

"My dear old Lu!" cried Alan, taking her hands and kissing her. "Between the Athelstane pride and the a-Dale pig-headed obstinacy you and I have come near to making a jolly muddle of everything. Let us dig a deep, deep grave bury the pride and the obstinacy together, that they may never come between us any more as long as we live."

"Perhaps," said Lu-Lu, after a pause, "if we had not married as we did, the hospitals would never have disgorged Crowsmount when the new will turned up."

"Never a penny!" answered Alan. "You saved Crowsmount and me alike "at the eleventh hour."

[THE END.]

Sad, Yet Happy.

BY OLIVE BELL.

EVERYBODY in Grafton knew Teddy. Teddy the six-year-old son of the poor friendless factory girl, who lived in a little brown house, just outside the town limits.

Teddy whose round chubby face was the picture of honesty and good humor; Teddy whose pathetic brown eyes and gentle womanly manners could soften the hardest heart in Grafton, and coax a penny out of the most miserly inhabitant of the busy little town.

"It costs nothing to be polite," Teddy would sagely remark to his companions, "and my politeness has given me many a meal."

But there came a day when Teddy's smiles came not so readily and when cheerful or jesting words died on his tongue. For Teddy's mother—the only creature on earth who stood between him and starvation—lay dying.

The little spark of life that Teddy's love and Teddy's boyish vivacity had kept alive in the young mother's heart, was flickering out at last, and Teddy, with a wisdom beyond his years, felt that before many days, the frail hands that had hitherto shielded him so carefully, would protect him no more.

Christmas eve came, and Teddy, with many a wistful glance at the Christmas good-things lying inside the gas-lit store windows, hurried homeward, with a few hard-earned pennies in his pocket.

Work was scarce in Grafton, and the mill-hands had suffered in consequence; and Teddy had found it hard work to keep his ailing mother in food.

His clothes were thin and ragged, but Teddy felt neither cold nor hunger, as he walked steadily onward, his great brown eyes looking up at the clear blue sky, and thinking over beautiful story of the Nativity, that his mother always told him on Christmas eve.

But she was ill to-night, and a lump came into Teddy's throat as he opened the door of the little brown house, and entered the gloomy room.

"Is that you, Teddy?" called a faint voice out of the gloom.

"Yes, mother," cheerfully replied Teddy, getting down on his knees to fan a few faggots on the hearth into a blaze.

The flames shot up presently, and lit up the little room, poor but clean and tidy, with many evidences of womanly tact and taste, visible in the homely appointments.

But Teddy saw nothing but the fragile mother, lying on her low bed.

She had been beautiful once—with a beauty that had been her ruin—and the violet eyes were lovely still, shining out of that pure white face, while the rich hair, glittering like dun-gold in the firelight, streamed over the narrow pillow in wavy masses.

"My pretty little mamma," Teddy cried, kissing the bright crimson spots on her thin cheeks; "how gay you look to-night."

Teddy's mother smiled, for the touch of his warm lips on her hot cheeks seemed to give her new life.

"I earned enough to-day to buy us something good for our Christmas dinner," Teddy said, smoothing the soft hair.

"O, Teddy, Teddy!" wailed the weak voice, and a grayness crept over the thin face that startled Teddy.

"What is it, mamma?" he whispered, "are you hungry?"

"No, my boy. The Lord has said we will never hunger or thirst in His kingdom, and I will soon be there."

Teddy knew what she meant. Her fireside teachings had taken deep root in his heart, and if all human aid failed him. Teddy knew there was One on high who heard the faintest cry of hunger or distress.

"Mother," he said, solemnly, "are you dying?"

"Yes, Teddy, I am going home at last." There was a pause, wherein that dying mother saw the desolate future of her child, and a dry, gasping sob. "O, my boy, what will become of you."

"God will take care of me," replied Teddy, brushing away some scalding tears with his ragged sleeve. "I'll miss my nice Christmas stories; but, mamma, you will see the Baby King."

Teddy glanced up at the little patch of sky, visible through the small window at the bed side, and saw one bright star, shining like a beacon light, on the jasper heights.

"You will be motherless, Teddy," his mother went on, "but if your earthly father never owns you, remember there is one in Heaven who will never overlook you."

"My father!" Teddy looked puzzled, "is he not dead, mamma?"

"Dead to you!" Teddy's mother covered her face with her wasted hands. There was a long silence between the two after that, and when the faint voice was heard again, Teddy bent his face to the blue lips to catch the words. "Here,"—her voice was very hoarse and her hands shook as Teddy's mother laid a golden locket in his hands, "this contains your father's picture. Keep it safely, Teddy, as I have done. Let neither poverty or sickness induce you to part with it. Promise me this, Teddy."

Teddy promised, with his eyes fixed greedily on the carved case of the locket, which seemed to him a pretty toy. His mother watched him, with the hungry lovelight of a last look, deepening in her eyes.

Ah! how the folly, the sin, the shame, of the days when she had loved not wisely, but too well, came home to her now. How every look, every word, of this child, who was worse than fatherless, smote her. She turned her face to the wall, and wept bitter tears of penitence, while a love that was pitiful to see in one so young, strove to comfort her.

"Don't fret, mamma," she would say, kissing the cold hands that lay on the covers, "Don't fret, God will take care of me."

"My darling!" she moaned, in an exhausted way, that deathly grayness overspreading her again again, "be honest and upright, and pray to Him nightly. God will never forsake you."

She folded her hands on her bosom, and lay perfectly still. The wax-like lids closed over the violet eyes, and Teddy sat very still, thinking she was falling asleep.

He had an indistinct idea that he was hungry, but could not leave his mother's bedside.

The faggots died out on the hearth, and Teddy dropped over asleep, with the locket tightly clasped in his chubby palm. When the morning broke the white lips would not answer his cries, for the mother's purified spirit had entered that land "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Teddy fled from the house. He had a child's horror of death, and this death was too terrible to be borne.

The Christmas bells were ringing merrily from a dozen spires; children with happy faces brushed heedlessly past Teddy, who wandered on and on, until exhausted by hunger and grief, he laid down on the marble steps of a handsome mansion.

Half an hour later a young, sweet-faced woman, clad in rich silks and warm furs, alighted from her carriage, and stooped wonderingly over the bundle of rags on her door-rug.

"What is this?" she exclaimed, turning to her coachman, "James, pick this child up and carry him into the house."

James obeyed, and soon laid Teddy on a soft velvet lounge in the library. Then hastily laying aside her wraps, Mrs. Reggi-nald Praff busied herself in resuscitating Teddy.

And when the sad brown eyes languidly unclosed, they looked into a face as tender, and almost as beautiful as that other rigid face, over which Teddy had shed such scalding tears.

"You were cold and hungry?" questioned Mrs. Praff, in her charming way, for she loved children passionately, although none had been given her, and Teddy, child-like, saw the love in her eyes.

"Oh, so cold, and hungry, and sorry," sobbed Teddy.

"What is your name?"

"Teddy!"

Mrs. Praff remembered his mother instantly. Often in going through her husband's mills this girl's beautiful but sorrowful face had arrested her attention.

"Where is your mother now, Teddy?"

"Dead! dead!" cried Teddy, bursting into a flood of tears. Little by little Mrs. Praff coaxed the sorrowful story from Teddy.

"Mamma said this was my father," he said in conclusion, as he laid the open locket in Mrs. Praff's lap.

With wide-open eyes, blanched cheeks, and tightly-set lips, Mrs. Praff stared at the pictured face, for the velvety black eyes of the man she loved so dearly, the husband she was proud of, smiled up into hers.

She had been the happiest of wives that Christmas morning, now a cloud seemed to settle around her that shrouded her future.

"How old are you, Teddy?" said the lady's soft, sweet voice.

"Six years old," replied Teddy, wondering at the lady's pale face.

And she had been'en years a dear wife!

"God forgive him!" she said under her breath. She rang the bell, and when the servant appeared, ordered him to send his master to her.

Mr. Reggi-nald Praff came pleasantly into his wife's presence, for if there was one being on the face of the earth this man loved and revered, it was this pure, spotless woman, whose worth was above rubies.

"What is it, Alice?" he began, but paused suddenly, for his eyes fell on Teddy.

"I have a Christmas gift for you, my husband," said his wife's rich voice, "allow me to give you a son."

She led Teddy up to Mr. Praff, who seemed struck speechless. The open locket in his wife's hand explained his wife's knowledge of his guilty secret. He shrank from the gaze of her righteous eyes, and grew blind and dizzy, when her voice broke the silence.

"My unhappy rival lies dead in her miserable home. The wrong you did her can never be righted in this world. As for myself——" she paused and looked at Teddy sorrowfully, "I will try to forgive you, and do my duty to this boy."

"Alice," her husband looked confounded, "you do not mean to let people know he is my son."

"I certainly do." Her tones cut him like a knife. "Teddy this is your father."

"And you——" Teddy clung to her hand, and glanced shyly at the tall gloomy man, "Will be a second mother to me?"

A promise she fulfilled to the letter, for Teddy's mother was quietly buried, and Mrs. Praff took the motherless boy to her sore heart, smothering her own rebellious thoughts with many prayers. But a cloud not larger than a man's hand, hovered between her and the man she loved—a cloud that had gathered that Christmas morning, which in after years, Teddy asserted, was the saddest yet happiest day of his life.

THE LOVING CUPS.—The custom of touching glasses prior to drinking healths off at Christmas and other times is common in this and other countries, and especially in Germany. It is curious to trace how this custom has prevailed and still exists even among savage tribes.

To drink out of the same cup, and to eat off the same plate, was one of the ways in which the ancients celebrated a marriage; and the wedding feast continues to the present day to be not the least important of the marriage ceremonies. The Indians of Brazil retain a custom of drinking a little brandy together, as a sign that the marriage is concluded.

In China similar customs are met with. In the mediæval banquets of Germany, it was the custom to pass a "loving cup" from hand to hand; but this gradually necessitated that the cup should be of enormous size, and thus smaller cups or glasses were adopted, and the old custom was conformed to by the drinkers touching their glasses before drinking.

The ceremony attending the passing and drinking out of the "loving cup," as practiced at our great city festivals and at some of our college halls, is said to have arisen from the assassination of King Edward II. It was then the custom of the Anglo-Saxons to pass round a large cup, from which each guest drank.

Who thus drank stood up, and, as he he lifted up the cup with both hands, his body was exposed, without any defence, to a blow, and the occasion was often seized by an enemy to murder him.

To prevent this, the following plan was adopted: When one of the company stood up to drink, he required the companion who sat next to him to be his pledge—that is, to be responsible for protecting him against anybody who should attempt to take advantage of his defenceless position.

This companion stood up also, and raised his drawn sword in his hand to defend the drinker while in the act of drinking.

This practice, in a somewhat altered form, continued long after the condition of society had ceased to require it, and it was the origin of the modern practice of pledging by drinking.

In partaking from the "loving cup," as now practiced, each person rises and takes the cup in his hand to drink, and at the same time the person seated next to him raises also, and, when the latter takes the cup in his turn, the individual next to him does the same.

COLLARS AND CUFFS.—A box to hold collars and cuffs is easily made of pasteboard; the circular pieces for the bottom and top and the sides each covered separately with some pretty material (odds and ends of which are in every house) and joined afterward. The top should be a trifle larger than the bottom, so that the cover will fit easily. The seams may be covered with a silk or tinsel cord, and a loop of the same placed on the top to pull off the cover.

"MARRIAGE is the salvation of a car-driver," said one of that brotherhood. "I average about $12 or $14 a week, and when I was single I never had a cent after I paid each week's debts. I had nowhere to go when I laid off, and so I would loaf in a beer saloon and spend 50 cents or $1 at a time. Now I go home, chuck myself on a lounge, have a cup of hot coffee always ready and a good woman to talk to, and I get along on less than $10 a week."

AT EVEN-TIME.

BY A. L. B.

Sweet flow'r that, with'ring from the noon-tide's heat,
Droopeth to earth thy head,
Look up—for soon the gentle hand of Night
Soft dews on thee shall shed!

Poor bird that all day long on weary wing
Hast sought thy distant rest,
Speed on, and soon the golden evening star
Shall light thee in thy nest!

Sad heart tried by the long and weary day,
Hope on, and thou shalt hear
The quiet music of the vesper chimes
Fall softly on thine ear!

The Sweetest Gift.

BY DORA RUSSELL.

LADY BARBARA BIDDULPH, a woman well advanced in middle age; a woman shrewd of tongue, and sharp of temper, was sitting one morning fuming and pondering over a letter that the post had just brought her, when her companion Miss Woodville entered the room, with a smile on her face and a blush on her faded cheeks.

"Are you engaged, Lady Barbara," she asked in a pleasant voice, "or can I speak to you for a few minutes?"

"What do you want?" answered Lady Barbara tartly, looking up from her letter; "if it's any nonsense don't bother me with it just now."

"Perhaps you may call it nonsense," said the companion rather demurely, though still with a smile, for she was accustomed to Lady Barbara's ways.

"What is it then? I suppose I must hear?"

"Well—the truth is, Lady Barbara—I am going to leave you."

"Going to leave me!" cried Lady Barbara, throwing the letter on the table before her. "Are you mad? What crotchet have you got into your head now, to talk of leaving a home like this? Where will you get such another I should like to know?"

"Indeed I have nothing to complain of—but I think I should tell you, Mr. Sinton, the vicar, has asked me to marry him, and I have written to accept his proposal."

"Mr. Sinton asked you to marry him!" repeated Lady Barbara, starting to her feet in indignation. "I suppose you know what that means? He wants you to be head-nurse to his seven motherless children, nothing more nor less, I assure you. Are you prepared to have relays of whooping-cough, measles and scarlet-fever under your charge for the next ten or fifteen years—I simply ask you that?"

"I hope I am prepared to do all I can to help a good man," answered Miss Woodville with some spirit.

"A good man!" said Lady Barbara sarcastically. "I should like to know where you will find one? But I suppose like all silly women you want to be married; you are willing to give up an excellent home where you have every comfort, and go to an uncomfortable one, for the sake of saying you have a husband? But you'll repent it; take my word for it, you'll repent it to the last day of your life."

Lady Barbara, or as she was commonly called Lady Bab, began walking hastily up and down the room in her anger, glancing occasionally, with contempt in her keen gray eyes at her meek-faced companion. But she had a good heart, and presently her expression softened.

Perhaps she was remembering the days when she too had chosen to have a husband and had accepted old General Biddulph, very much for the same reason that she was now taunting Miss Woodville with.

"Well, I suppose," she said presently in a milder tone, "you expect me to wish you joy?"

"I hope you will do so, Lady Barbara."

"It's the strangest thing," continued Lady Barbara, going back to the table and taking up the letter she had flung down on hearing Miss Woodville's news. "Read this—if you are really going to be so silly, perhaps this will just fit in?"

Miss Woodville took the letter and read it gravely.

It was the saddest letter; written by a widow in the first dark hours of her bitter bereavement.

"Dear Lady Barbara,—I have no right, I know, to write to you, nor to trouble you with an account of the terrible blow that has fallen on us; but I remember how kind you were always to me in the old days when I was at Lord Kingston's, and so I find courage to address you. My dear, dear husband died a fortnight ago—and oh! Lady Barbara, I can scarcely tell you how he died. We were always so happy, and he was so good to me and the girls, that it makes the shock a hundred times more dreadful to bear. But he had speculated, and got into great difficulties, and to my anguish and horror, he shot himself, and left me a widow, and his children fatherless. I have three girls, and we are totally unprovided for. Could you in your great kindness of heart do something for one of the girls? I mean, could you find her some situation as a companion or governess? Sibyl, my second daughter, seems to feel the blow most, and I am very uneasy about her. If you will help us I shall always pray God to bless you.

"Very sincerely yours,
"ELIZABETH SELBY."

This letter, which Miss Woodville read with a sympathetic heart, was written by a lady whom Lady Barbara Biddulph had known for many years.

She had been the governess of Lord Kingston's children, and Lord Kingston was Lady Barbara's brother.

When pretty Elizabeth May married Mr. Selby, who was supposed to be a flourishing lawyer in the big, bustling northern town of Rochland, every one, including her employer Lord Kingston, said what a good marriage she had made.

And so it seemed for many years. Mr. Selby lived in a good house, and kept a good establishment, and was an open-handed genial man, always glad and happy to have his friends around him.

And as years rolled on the pretty prattling children of the household grew into womanhood, and people said they were the handsomest girls in Rochland, and that Sibyl, the second daughter, was the beauty of them all.

She had had many lovers when the cruel blow fell which left them without father or home.

And there was one lover—the one lover whom she had ever loved—to whom she was absolutely engaged to at this time, and with a trembling hand, and bitter grief in her heart, she had written to Captain Noel Jervis to set him free.

There had been a little romance already about these two, for Captain Jervis was a poor highly-connected man, and the daughter of a lawyer in a provincial town, even in Mr. Selby's palmy days, was scarcely a fitting match for him.

But they had met first at balls and parties, and then often in a low-lying meadow-lands, through which the river Roch crept on its sluggish way.

And gradually there had grown between them a passionate love.

Noel Jervis knew this and Sibyl knew it, yet he had struggled with his feelings, telling himself it was but sweet madness; that he had nothing to offer the girl; that he must try to forget her.

Then his regiment was ordered to leave Rochland, to proceed to India. This brought the affair to a crisis.

Sibyl's cheeks were pale, and there was sharp anguish in her heart, but she hid this as best she could.

But one day wandering restlessly near their old trysting-place by the Roch, Captain Jervis unexpectedly came on Sibyl, whose sweet face was wet and stained with tears.

This was more than he had strength to bear. He sat down beside her; he told her in a few simple words that he loved her; that he was too poor to marry at present; but would she wait for him? Would she be his wife in happier days?

Then the girl raised her glad eyes to his face and whispered her answer. She would wait years.

She did not care how many years, she told him, and as Jervis clasped her to his breast, he said he was, and thought himself, a happy man.

But the hours they spent together dreaming of the future were very brief. A week after their engagement Captain Jervis's regiment left Rochland, and Sibyl Selby had only the memory of her love to console her, and the photograph of the handsome soldier to whom she was betrothed.

And she lived on this memory. She was a girl with strong deep feelings, and she had given Jervis her whole heart.

And when the blow came that crushed them all so low her first thought was of her absent lover.

Mrs. Selby's letter to Lady Barbara Biddulph had not indeed told all the sad truth. Mr. Selby had taken money intrusted to his care, and there was shame, as well as pain and sorrow, left for his portionless children.

And when Sibyl heard this she told herself she was bound in honor to release Jervis from his engagement.

She did this, and endured after she had written the letter such intense anxiety and pain that no wonder her mother told Lady Barbara she was very uneasy about her child.

And as Miss Woodville laid the poor widow's letter down, Lady Barbara once more took it up.

"One of these girls might suit me," she said after reading it again. "But," she added, looking sharply at her companion, "are you really going to make a dunce of yourself?"

"If you mean," said Miss Woodville, with a good-tempered laugh, "am I really going to marry Mr. Sinton, I really am?"

"Then reach me some telegraph forms," commanded Lady Barbara, in her imperious way, and her companion having done so, she sent the following telegram to Mrs. Selby at Rochland:

"I will take one of your girls for a time; send me the best looking one, and the one who reads best."

* * * * * *

These words went to a sad household; a household absolutely in need of daily bread.

Mr. Selby had died owing thousands and thousands of dollars, and perhaps naturally when the first shock of his death was over his creditors were not very tender to his memory.

They had lived completely beyond their means, one angry man said to the other, and even the poor girls came in for their share of blame.

There was one debt that Sibyl owed that almost killed her to think of. When Captain Jervis was leaving Rochland she had given him a valuable diamond ring which she had not paid for at the time, intending to do so out of her allowance when he was gone; for what need would she have for finery she told herself when her Noel was away.

And now the jeweler had applied for this debt and Sibyl had nothing to give him. The man was civil enough; he said he would rather take back the ring if he could not get the money, but Sibyl had written to him that she would pay him if he would give her a little time.

Therefore when Lady Barbara's telegram arrived, the half-broken-hearted girl at once said she would accept her offer.

"Well, you are the best looking, Sibyl," sighed the sad mother.

"It is not that," answered Sibyl, "but I must make some money; in London I could do many things, paint fans and cards, and perhaps for your sake Lady Barbara will help me."

It was soon settled after this, and a few days later, one mild spring evening, about seven o'clock, a black-robed girl, with a pale sweet face, was ushered into Lady Barbara's drawing-room.

Lady Barbara lived in one of the small streets leading out of Park Lane, and she was a woman well off in the world. She had a small house in town and a small house at Brighton, and a small house in a pretty Devonshire village called Rainton, the vicar of this place being now going to marry her companion, Miss Woodville.

And as the black-robed girl entered her drawing-room Lady Barbara rose and held out her hand.

"How are you, my dear?" she said kindly, for there was something in Sibyl's face that took her fancy. "Don't begin to talk now; I shall hear all about your poor mother and your home news afterwards. Woodville, get her some tea—how slow you are! I declare I believe you think of nothing now but that vicar of yours and his numerous progeny!"

Lady Barbara was always scolding poor Woodville, but somehow she never scolded Sibyl.

From the first she took to the young girl, and did her best to cheer and amuse her.

"Woodville is an old goose, you know, to marry this man;" she told Sibyl privately, "but all the same she has been with me seventeen years, so I intend to give her a trousseau as she calls it, and a silver tea-pot before she goes away. Trousseau, indeed! at her age, but some women always make dunces of themselves, and Woodville is one of them."

Nevertheless Lady Barbara was very kind to Woodville, and gave her many things beside the silver tea-pot which she had promised her.

And she also gave the wedding breakfast, though she could not restrain her sarcastic tongue about "the young pair."

The wedding and the excitement served to distract a little the consuming anxiety that was preying on poor Sibyl Selby's health.

Each day now she expected an answer to her letter to Captain Jervis, in which she had released him from his engagement, and hope and fear by turns filled her heart.

Would he take her at her word? Ah, with what passionate longing and tears Sibyl prayed that he would not!

The letter came at last—too soon, too soon! In sorrowful, regretful, and tender words Captain Jervis told her he supposed her decision was the wisest one; that his own position was bad; that he had debts and a mother whom he was obliged partly to support; that it must have been years and years before they could have thought of marrying.

"But I shall never forget you, Sibyl," he added, "and for your sweet sake may I keep the ring which you gave me as a token of our love?"

These last words (the one little bit of consolation to poor Sibyl's breaking heart) aroused great indignation in her family. For when Sibyl was forced to tell her sisters that Captain Jervis had accepted her release, Bessie Selby, the eldest girl, wrote at once to say that she hoped that he had sent back the diamond engagement ring.

"I shall think it is quite dishonest if he has not," wrote Bessie; "and I am obliged, Sibyl, candidly to tell you that Mr. Hawes, the jeweler, says he must have either the ring or the money."

Then Sibyl, in her despair and anguish, did what she never thought she could have found courage to do.

She went to Lady Barbara and told her the whole story, only suppressing Captain Jervis's name.

"Oh! Lady Barbara!" prayed the poor girl, with streaming eyes and faltering tongue, "will you lend me this money? If you will, I shall work for you all my life without pay—I shall do anything for you—but, but spare me this!"

"I think he is a mean hound," answered plain-tongued Lady Barbara, "to break off his engagement, but all the same I can understand your feelings. Yes, my dear, you shall have the money—$300 dollars, is it? All right, you shall have it to-day; but don't break your heart for a worthless man."

And Sibyl bent down and kissed Barbara's bony, jeweled hand.

And the money for the ring was paid, and Sibyl tried for Lady Barbara's sake to hide her bitter pain.

Then the season commenced, and Lady Barbara's friends came up to town, and her little drawing-room was often full of visitors. And among these visitors came her niece, Miss Melicent Penny.

"My sister," Lady Barbara told Sibyl, "chose to marry James Penny, the rich brewer, and he has left my niece a great fortune. They made her father into a baronet before he died, but they did not make him into a gentleman! Melicent is a tall, fine girl, and has two hundred thousand dollars, so they call her a beauty, but she isn't and never will be."

This was a very true description of Miss Melicent Penny. She was a tall, fine girl, and nothing more.

She had regular features, and there was some consciousness of her great wealth in her manner.

"You remind me of your father, my dear," Lady Barbara used sometimes to say to her spitefully; and the heiress did not like to hear this, and confided to Sibyl, "that certainly Aunt Barbara was the most disagreeable old woman" she knew.

All the same, she liked to be seen with Aunt Barbara, occasionally, and was very pressing with her profuse hospitality to her relation.

"You must come to me at Christmas," she told Lady Barbara, near the close of the season. "And you, too, Miss Selby? I intend to have lots of fun, and Pennythrone Hall is such a beautiful place—I don't suppose you ever saw such a house before."

"There is a chance for you, Sibyl," said said Lady Barbara dryly.

* * * * * *

There followed Sibyl to Brighton, when she went there in the next autumn with Lady Barbara, a small packet, and when she opened this she found it contained the diamond ring she had given to Captain Jervis and which Lady Barbara had paid for.

There was no letter with the ring, nor message. But there the glittering thing lay shining before her, to remind her of her lost happiness.

It was like the re-opening of an old wound, and cost Sibyl days and days of cruel pain.

The packet was addressed in Captain Jervis's own handwriting, and bore the Indian post-mark. He was still in India then, the poor girl thought, and had sent back her ring as a token that he had forgotten her.

But she did not tell even Lady Barbara that he had returned it. She hid it silently away, just as she tried to hide her bitter disappointment.

She knew the world scoffs at broken hearts and blighted affections, and she did not care to be its jest.

They stayed all the autumn at Brighton, and then on the 23d of December started for Pennythrone Hall to spend the Christmas. It was quite true what Melicent Penny had told Sibyl, for she had never been in such a house before.

A great, vast house, with turrets and battlements and wings and fronts, until it was actually bewildering. It was magnificently furnished also, and now decorated with holly and mistletoe, and quite a large party were staying in the house; and when Lady Barbara and Sibyl arrived half-a-dozen young people were drinking tea round a big glowing fire in the hall.

Melicent went forward and welcomed her aunt and her companion, and introduced them to some of her friends.

"The men will be here presently," she said in her careless way. "The hounds meet to-day, and Captain Jervis and some of the others are out."

Sibyl felt the blood rush to her face at the sound of the old familiar name, but the next minute told herself how foolish it was, that there might be many Captain Jervis's, that she must learn to hear the name without shrinking.

But some ten minutes later one or two pink-coated men entered the hall, and among them, with a sudden spasm at her heart, a sudden flood of overwhelming emotion, Sibyl recognised Noel Jervis. He never saw her.

Melicent was calling for liqueurs and brandy and soda, was laughing and jesting; and the trembling girl stood back in the shade, and her old lover did not even look at her.

And when they went upstairs to dress for dinner Melicent followed her aunt and Sibyl to their rooms.

"Did you notice that tall man," she said to Sibyl, "with gray eyes, in the hall? That is Captain Noel Jervis, and I have promised to marry him. He is very good-looking, isn't he?"

Sibyl tried to speak, but her tongue failed her. But Melicent never noticed her emotion; she was too much taken up with herself and her engagement to heed the feelings of her aunt's companion.

She prattled on about this and that, and then when she went away Sibyl sank down upon her knees and prayed for strength to bear this last and bitterest blow.

It was at the long and gorgeous dinner-table that Noel Jervis's eyes first fell on Sibyl's sweet face. He stared at her; he could not believe in the evidence of his own senses.

He was sitting by the side of his betrothed, Miss Melicent Penny, and in a strangely altered voice he asked her who the girl was in white with black ribbons.

"Oh, that's my aunt, Lady Barbara Biddulph's companion," answered Melicent; "her name is Sibyl Selby; she is rather pretty, isn't she?"

But Captain Jervis expressed no opinion. A hundred tender recollections were sweeping over his heart like a deep flood. He remembered Sibyl's parting kiss, her tearful expressions of regret and love. Only the strongest reasons would have induced him to give his consent to the cancelling of their engagement, but his own poverty and Sibyl's seemed to make the

marriage impossible.

Now his circumstances were slightly changed, for a distant relative had left him a small legacy.

And as he looked from Sibyl to the girl to whom he was now betrothed, he knew to which woman his heart was true, and that he had made a fatal mistake.

When the men returned to the drawing-room, he went up to Sibyl, shook hands with her, and sat down by her side.

"This is a strange meeting," he said in a low tone.

"Yes," answered Sibyl with quivering lips.

"You are not looking very strong, have you not been well?"

"We have gone through so much," faltered Sibyl; and Lady Barbara, who was watching these two with her keen eyes, began to wonder if this was the man for whose ring she had paid.

Presently Melicent Penny came up to them, and touched Jervis's shoulder with her big fan.

"Come and dance," she said; "the ball-room is open."

The ball-room adjoined the drawing-room and already some young couples were dancing a waltz.

"Will you dance this dance with me?" asked Jervis, looking at Sibyl.

"This dance?" she hesitated, for she saw that Melicent expected to dance with her betrothed.

"Yes," said Jervis briefly, and he offered Sibyl his arm, and led her away.

And for the next few minutes the old sweet madness, the old fond love made them both forget all else. As he clasped her closely in his arms Jervis bent over Sibyl's forehead, and whispered a few passionate words in her ear:

"Why did you write that letter, Sibyl—the letter that parted us?"

"I had no choice; it was the one thing honor left me to do," answered the girl with heaving breast.

"I wish to heaven it had been left undone!"

"And you," said Sibyl, as they stopped to breathe; "why did you send back the ring, Noel, you had asked to keep?"

A curious expression passed over Captain Jervis's face.

"I might have known," he muttered, "dunce that I was. You did not know then, Sibyl, of the letter your sister, Bessie, wrote to me?" he asked the next moment.

"That Bessie wrote to you! I knew of no letter."

"She wrote me a very insulting letter, and told me that as I had been mean enough to break off my engagement because you had become poor, she hoped at least I would not be mean enough to keep the valuable ring you had given me, as I could not wish to do so really for anything but its intrinsic worth."

"Oh! Noel, what—what you must have thought?"

"But for this letter I should never have asked another woman to be my wife."

The music was going on, and the dancing; they looked in each others' faces, and went on dancing too, but somehow a great weight seemed to have been lifted off poor Sibyl's heart. He had not forgotten her then; he loved her still.

* * * * * *

That night, when the ladies retired to their bedrooms, Lady Barbara called her young companion into her room.

Lady Barbara was attired in a long, white dressing-gown when Sibyl went in, with a flush on her sweet face, and a light in her eyes, that Lady Barbara had never seen there before.

"Come here, child," said Lady Barbara, who was standing with her back to the large blazing fire, "and tell me what you think of Melicent's fine lover—so, it seems he is an old friend of yours?"

"Yes," said Sibyl with faltering tongue.

"Not the man," began Lady Barbara, jerking her spare person from side to side in her energy to learn the truth; "not the man, I hope, who——"

But the next moment she gave a shrill cry! A tongue of flame from the fire had caught her dimity dressing-gown, and in an instant ran on in its consuming way.

A moment later, it was mounting to her gray head. But with a cry, too, Sibyl, thoughtless of her own uncovered neck and arms, had sprung to her assistance.

The girl caught up the hearth-rug, and wrapped it round her old friend; she crushed out the flames with her gloved hands, forgetful almost of the sharp stings of agony, as they licked her own white skin.

But she must save Lady Barbara! That was her one thought, and she did save her.

The burnt dressing-gown lay on the floor; Lady Barbara stood gasping, but not much injured, when Sibyl perceived her own white muslin gown was on fire!

Then she lost her presence of mind. With a shriek she opened the room door and ran screaming along the corridor. There was a man coming up the broad staircase; he saw her, and caught her in his arms, and flung her down.

It all took very few minutes. But Sibyl saw who it was who had torn off his own coat, and wrapped her in it; who was clasping her closely, crushing out the flames with his hands. It was her old lover, Noel Jervis, and as she knew this, the bitterness of death seemed gone.

"I would rather die, Noel," she murmured, as in frantic terms of endearment and tenderness, he told her she was saved, "for I have suffered so much, oh! so much!"

* * * * * *

They carried her to her own room, and Lady Barbara and the hastily-summoned doctor and nurse were all that were allowed to stay.

She was terribly burned, her lovely neck and throat scorched and scarred, and her poor arms and hands. And all that night, backwards and forwards, Noel Jervis walked in the corridor, like a man half out of his mind.

"If she is to die, let me see her again," he implored of Lady Barbara, and she did not refuse.

"So you were her lover?" she said, and he answered, "Yes."

The next day came, and the next—Christmas Day—and that morning, the most blest of all the year, the doctors told Lady Barbara that they hoped her young friend would live.

By this time Melicent Penny had had an interview with Captain Jervis, and had informed him, that as he seemed so wrapped up in the life of the poor, burnt girl lying upstairs, that she thought she should prefer breaking off her engagement with him. And Jervis had answered by telling her the truth.

"We were to be married," he said; "only poverty prevented us."

Thus, when Lady Barbara was told there was hope for Sibyl, she considered herself justified in sending for Jervis.

"Captain Jervis," she said, in her brusque way, "I am an old-fashioned woman and like to pay my debts. The poor girl there," and she nodded in the direction of Sibyl's room, "saved my life; and you saved hers by your promptitude and courage. Now, though I don't spend my money in the ostentatious way that my niece Melicent does, I am, still, not a poor woman, and I want to make you a gift—a Christmas gift—to show my gratitude?"

Then, Jervis bent down, and took Lady Barbara's hand.

"Will you give me one gift," he said, with deep emotion; "the sweetest gift—Sibyl herself?"

Lady Barbara laughed; she had hoped for such an answer.

"Well," she said, "if you call a young woman the sweetest gift, I don't! I call life—Sibyl saved my life—so when you get what you think the sweetest, she shall not go to you penniless. Would you like to see her now?"

And Jervis followed Lady Barbara to Sibyl's bedroom, and knelt down by the bed, and took the poor burnt, bandaged hands in his and kissed them, and laid them against his cheek.

"My sweetest gift," he whispered, "my sweetest, sweetest gift!"

* * * * * *

And Lady Barbara was as good as her word. She settled on those young people during her lifetime an income sufficient for all their requirements, and she left them, after her death, what she called in her quaint, old-world fashion, "something very pretty indeed!"

SAYINGS AND ANSWERS.

THE comical element amongst youngsters is not nearly so frequently made note of by teachers as it might be, and many queer sayings and laughable answers are thus lost, giving only a temporary diversion and hilarity amid the tedium and monotony of school-work.

The vicar of a certain parish was in the habit of giving religious instruction at the grammar-school of the town. At the close of his series of lessons, he was wont to receive written replies on the subject-matter.

On being asked what a "laver" was, one answer was indited: "A laborer is a washing-vessel or bason;" the writer thoughtfully concluding, for the credit of his calligraphy, "George Juniper, forth class, wrote with a sprain thumb."

A teacher having told his class that "divers" meant "various" in the verse beginning, "But when divers were hardened," added, that to make the sense complete another word (people) was necessary; whereupon a pupil instantly rose and read out the petrifying paraphrase, with considerable emphasis on the article, "But when the divers were hardened."—Asked to place an adjective before the noun "tree," an unconscious but grammatical one wrote, "wooden—wooden tree."

It is to be supposed that our next youth had heard that the eagle could gaze at the sun without winking. He wrote, however, in a rather redundant way:

"The Romans never had flags but a eagle on their sticks, it is a noble bird, it looked up at the sun with its eyes open."

Historians make a mistake in calling Christopher Columbus a Genoese—he was an Englishman, for, with the spirit of patriotism burning in him, a boy says:

"The first Englishman who sailed round the wourld was by name cristoper Columbus."

The following geographical definitions may be of use to others:

"A cape is a piece of land joining the sea;" and "a volcanoe is a burning mounting wich spits fire and lather."

That the earth is round is proved by the fact that the earth goes round the sun! A little well-brought-up boy wrote:

"Geography tells us about the earth and the sea, countries and rivers and lakes and"—with a devout and extraordinary apostrophe pens the invocation—"above grace give us knowledge."

The under-mentioned lad held up his hand triumphantly whilst several companions gave the correct answer. His twinkling eyes showed he knew, if they did not.

"How many feet were there in a field where stood a shepherd, his boy, and five sheep?"—"Four" was his eager reply; because the rest, he said, "weren't feet—they were only trotters."

A quiet and watery-eyed pupil transcribing, "These poor savages cannot be called the ancestors of the British people," was slightly in error when he wrote, "These poor sausages," etc.

Being asked for examples of animals having coarse hair, one boy thought a Shetland pony. After a pause, another remarked that a pig, too, had coarse hair. But this was completely beaten by another boy, who rose to wind up the subject by stating that "hengehogs and porcupines," he considered, "had the coarsest and stiffest hair of all."

A master having propounded the Darwinian theory that such birds as herons, storks, and the like owe their length of leg to the habit, extending over ages, of seeking their food in the water and constantly dragging their feet out of the mud, met a poser from a juvenile anti-Darwinian who requested to know, "How long will the legs of herons be in a few more ages?"

A boy in the same division was heard shortly afterwards to give a malicious recommendation to another rejoicing in the sobriquet of "Stumpy" on account of his remarkably short understandings. He recommended "Stumpy" to "wear heavy boots."

In the course of a reading lesson, the word "sensation" cropped up, and the teacher asked what it meant. Receiving no satisfactory response, he attempted to elicit the answer by saying:

"Come, boys, I'm sure you must know; it's something, for instance, which passes up your arms when you touch a galvanic battery. What is it? Well, my lad, I see you know something."

"Something we feel, sir."

"Yes, that is very good," encouraged the questioner; "but I want the name for it."

"Please, sir, I know," came an answer from another part of the class: "my mother catched one up our Tom's sleeve this morning!"

In examining the boys in the composition of sentences, a master began:

"If I ask you," said he, "what have I in my hand? you must not say simply "Chalk," but make a full sentence of it, and say: "You have chalk in your hand."

"Now I will proceed. What have I on my feet?" The answer came immediately: "Boots."—"Wrong; you haven't been observing my directions," he rebukingly replied. "Stockings," another heedlessly ventured to answer. "Wrong again—worse than ever," wrathfully exclaimed the magister. "Well?" he continued interrogatively to a lad near him. "Please, sir;" then he paused—perhaps he thought it might sound funny, but he felt it must be right, and so he recklessly gasped it out: "Corns!"

"What are you talking about there?" demanded a teacher, addressing himself to the loquacious son of a railway porter. But the teacher obtained no response, and was obliged to ask another lad who sat next the delinquent. "What was George talking about?"

"Please, sir, he was saying as his father's trousers is sent down to Brighton when they gets old, and they's made into sugar there, and that's how 'tis sugar's gone down!"

Another Cuvier has arisen. He is very young yet; but the time will come when he will take his proper place as the leading light among animal physiologists. In his essay on the horse he wrote only a bit, but that bit was good—it was concise, and to the point.

The examiners showed the paper upon which the dissertation was written to one another, and smiled approvingly at the little author. Young Cuvier had simply touched upon the subject in geometrico-physico manner:

"Essay on the Horse.—The horse is a useful creacher. It eats corn it is a sort of square animal with a leg at each corner and has a head at one end and a tale at the other."

The examiners forgave the little chap. He looked innocent. They thought his mind had been perhaps wandering—that he had been thinking about his hobby-horse.

HEALTH UP.—An erect bodily attitude is of vastly more importance to health than most people generally imagine. Crooked bodily positions, maintained for any length of time, are always injurious, whether in the sitting, standing, or lying posture, whether sleeping or waking. To sit with the body leaning forward on the stomach or to one side, with the heels elevated on a level with the hands, is not only in bad taste, but exceedingly detrimental to health; it cramps the stomach, presses the vital organs, interrupts the free motion of the chest, and enfeebles the functions of the abdominal and thoracic organs, and, in fact, unbalances the whole muscular system. Many children become slightly hump-backed or severely round-shouldered by sleeping with the head raised on a high pillow. When any person finds it easier to sit or stand or walk or sleep in a crooked position than a straight one, such may be sure his muscular system is deranged, and the more careful he is to preserve an upright position and get straight again the better.

PILLOW shams are going out of fashion. Slowly but surely things are coming to be judged according to their usefulness. Presently we shall expect to find a chair without a tidy.

Scientific and Useful.

CHERRY-STAIN IMITATION OF MAHOGANY.—Digest logwood-chips in vinegar or acetic acid for twenty-four hours or more. When ready to use, heat the solution; then dip the wood until a suitable color is obtained.

BOTTLES FOR DRAINS.—A church in Wisconsin has been drained by means of empty champagne wine bottles. The necks and ends were broken off and the bottles run into each other, neck to bottom, so as to make a channel or pipe, which has satisfactorily carried off the surplus water.

ELECTRIC-MOTORS.—Electric-motors for small powers are coming into quite general use in Boston. Some twenty-five sewing-machine plants are being run by them, and eight passenger and sixteen freight elevators, and in one case a motor furnishes the power for an elevator carrying over four tons, and running five or six stories.

FRUIT.—Taken in the morning, fruit is as helpful to digestion as it is refreshing. The newly-awakened function finds in it an object of such light labor as will exercise without seriously taxing its energies, and the tissues of the stomach acquire, at little cost, a gain of nourishment which will sustain those energies in later and more serious operations. It is an excellent plan, with this object in view, to add a little bread to the fruit eaten.

LIFE CHANCES.—The chances of life are thus set down: Out of every 1000 men twenty-five die annually. One-half those who are born die before they attain the age of 7 years. The men able to bear arms form a fourth of the inhabitants of a country. More old men are found in elevated situations than in valleys and plains. The number of inhabitants of a city or country is renewed every thirty years. The proportion between the deaths of women and those of men is 100 to 108. The probable duration of female lives is 60 years, but after that period the calculation is more favorable to them than to men.

GRAIN SCALES.—A St. Louis man has invented an automatic grain scale. It consists of a box with inclined partitions placed on an ordinary scale. Within this box is a revolving pan supported on a rocking lever. Attached to the lever is an upright upon which rests a vibrating valve for the purpose of cutting off the main flow of grain. Extending down from this valve is a rod that disturbs the equilibrium of the grain when the pan is full, and causes it to discharge itself. The grain pours through the main opening until the pan contains almost the required weight; then the level on which the pan rests rocks and partially cuts off the flow. The grain now runs in a very small stream until the weight is completed, when the box descends and the scale beam rises, breaking the electric circuit, which, acting on the electro-magnet, causes the supplemental valve to cut off the grain completely.

Farm and Garden.

PLENTY OF ROOM.—All young animals need room for exercise. Calves should not be too closely confined when being fed by hand. Colts require even more room, as they are fond of galloping around an enclosure.

HINTS.—When a board gets loose on any farm building fasten it at once. A nail in time saves nine, and perhaps as many feet of lumber.—A farmer says fifty cents' worth of awls, punches, linen thread, and shoemakers' wax will save $10 in harness repairs in twelve months.

LEAKS.—A slight leak in the roof of the stable may not cause much damage, but it will allow a certain amount of water to reach the floor, thereby rendering the stable damp. In cold weather dryness promotes warmth, while nothing conduces so much to lung diseases as moisture.

AN ACRE.—Making first an allowance for fence-room and pathways, an acre of ground is about 200 feet square, and in estimating the yield on plots a quick calculation may be made with the use of round numbers, as there is always a loss of space on an acre of ground or more from roads, paths, fences, etc.

GUINEA HENS.—It has been ascertained by an observer that flocks of poultry that have guinea fowls among them are never interfered with by chicken thieves. The guinea is always on the alert, and the least disturbance will cause it to make a very loud outcry well known to farmers. This fowl should be found on every farm and on every hen-roost.

CARE OF STOCK.—When stock must wade knee-deep in the filth of the barn-yard, colds and diseases usually result. Dryness and warmth are essential for the rapid development of bone and flesh. Happiness and contentment are as essential to the success of animals, so far as health is concerned, as they are with human beings.

ARABIAN HORSES.—All Arabian horses are of middling size, very easy in their paces, and rather thin than fat. They are cleaned every morning and evening regularly with so much care that not the smallest spot is left on their skin, and their legs mane and tail are washed. The latter is allowed to grow long, and is seldom combed, to avoid breaking the hairs. They have nothing given them to eat all day, and seldom are allowed to drink more than two or three times a day. At sunset a bag is fastened around their heads, containing about half a bushel of very clean barley, which is not taken from them until the next morning, when all is eaten up.

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Now is the Time to Raise Clubs for the Coming Year.

Marked Reduction in Club Rates.

We would direct the attention of our friends and readers to the *marked reduction in our club rates* as given above, and respectfully ask those who are in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST to enter the field soon as possible and try to increase their lists.

We are hoping to get a great many good sized clubs for the coming year, and trust every one of our subscribers and readers will make an effort to send one. We make it easy for you to do so, for we have *reduced the club rates* to such a figure as to place THE POST within the reach of all, and it will require but a little effort on the part of any one to secure enough subscribers at the very low rates we offer to make a club.

Just think of it, 10 copies of THE POST *one year, with an extra copy for getter-up of club, making 11 copies for $10.*

You can, dear reader, without much trouble, get ten persons to take THE POST at one dollar per year and thereby secure a copy free for yourself.

If you cannot obtain a club of ten, we hope you will try and get a few subscribers and secure the rates which are offered for a less number.

THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get a few new subscribers at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

On Time's Road.

On the way that Time is traveling with us all towards Eternity, we have come to another Christmas mile-stone of the year. And around it—like the fertile oases amid the great deserts, parched and burned by torrid heat, or locked and frozen by arctic cold—we find pleasant resting-places to muse over the incidents of the o'ergone track, enjoy present delights, and rise, strengthened in all the nobler feelings of our common nature, to face what is to come.

The holy season of love and happiness showers its blessings upon the earth and awakens the truly Christian heart to grateful outpourings of recognition towards heaven. Let the months gone by be what they may, there are few souls that will not respond to the joyful spirit of the time, and few voices that cannot join in the glorious anthem of prayer and thanks rising from man to God.

Christmas with some of the more fortune-favored, may shine hardly above its companions in the calendar. With them every moment is so enframed with golden memories, or hopes, or deeds, that it scarce beams brighter than its fellows. Yet, while it is possible, we do not believe that there are any who do not rejoice with exceeding great joy, and welcome the coming of the great festival. And, on the other hand, what heart so sad, what life so lowly, whose load is not lightened, whose darkness is not made less dark, at the thought of the approaching day?

There can be no doubt that at this season all are more willing to listen to the promptings of their hearts and encourage kindly sentiments towards each other. A prominent notion that comes to-day, a blessed guest with many, is that then at least old scores or bad credits are rubbed out, and all begin again with new hopes and aspirations; this compact being sealed between ourselves and the world by the rites of kindly speech, and gift, and hospitality.

Unlike all other holidays, or days that are not holidays, this has a character peculiarly and essentially its own. It is a holy centre, to which tend the varied rays of the year; a temple where all come at once to worship; a gold cord which holds, strung upon it like diamond stones, the best virtues of the heart. It changes and is succeeded by other days, but there are ever hung up in most memories pictures of it that no lapse of time can ever truly hide from view. In the busy turmoil of life they may seemingly lose something of their early lustre, but when the leaves begin to fall, and the snow, like tiny letters, announce that Christmas is again at hand, they reveal themselves in love just as bright, or brighter, than before.

The lessons they teach are to help the poorer than ourselves, cheer the hapless, make merry the dear ones of our own circle. For in the kindly work that this implies, the pleasant mood, the gift, the friendly congratulation, if no more, there is much of the best bread and wine of affection for strengthening the energies of the soul.

It can, and often does happen, that, with the passing of the day, old feelings and habits resume their wonted reign. Still, where the Christmas angel touches the pool of life it must render the waters blessed, if only for a season, and there is much in that. The recollection of a joy given, by word or deed, will lingar around the memory and make pleasanter our intercourse with all. But the glorious influence of these things stops not with the doer. Like mercy—the sister grace of charity—it blesses both him that gives and him that takes. And it is told us that in Life's Book the names of those who truly love their fellow-men lead all the rest in brightness and in fame.

IT is well for the world that charity should work in it anyhow, from any motive. And it is far better, even for ourselves, that we should be diligent in the service of others, whatever the imperfection of our motive, than not diligent. And we may pass through lower motives to higher; gradually purifying our work from the dross of selfishness as we go on and get forward. Still we think it is good for us, both as an exercise of salutary humiliation, and still more as a means of casting out evil from our hearts and lives, to contemplate the diviner form of a real Christian charity as it is set before us in the pages of the Holy Scripture; to remind ourselves, for example, that then only is charity perfect, even as its Source and its Inspirer is perfect, when in no sense it seeks its own; when neither the desire of human applause or human gratitude, nor even the desire of self-improvement, much less of self-approval or self-justifying, has any place in it; but the heart has learnt something of that most sublime of all exercises—self-forgetfulness and self sacrifice.

"AND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

TO recount the crimes and vices, faults and failings that have come under our notice, to discuss them critically and censure them at leisure, is a positive injury to society. It injures the erring ones in a double manner. Even should the truth alone be uttered, they suffer needlessly in reputation. Many a one has been crushed down who might have repented and conquered had not all the doors of sympathy and help been thus closed to him. Besides, it is almost impossible in these recitals to give or to gain only true impressions. Exaggerations slip in, motives are impugned, surmises thrown out, just allowances forgotten, and cruel judgments often formed.

IN all other human gifts and passions, though they advance nature, yet they are subject to excess; but charity alone admits no excess. For so we see, by aspiring to be like God in power the angels transgressed and fell; by aspiring to be like God in knowledge man transgressed and fell; but by aspiring to be like God in goodness or love neither man nor angel ever did or shall transgress. For unto that imitation we are called.

OH, if we would be of any use one to another; if we would move in the world as Christ's witnesses, whether among equals or among inferiors, we must pray without ceasing for a gentle and a loving soul, even for that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price.

TO complain that life has no joys while there is a single creature whom we can relieve by our bounty, assist by our counsels, or enliven by our presence, is to lament the loss of that which we possess, and is just as irrational as to die of thirst with the cup in our hands.

WE judge of others for the most part by their good opinion of themselves; yet nothing gives such offence, or creates so many enemies, as that extreme self-complacency or supercilliousness of manner, which appears to set the opinion of every one else at defiance.

WONDER, connected with a principle of rational curiosity, is the source of all knowledge and discovery, and it is a principle even of piety; but wonder which ends in wonder, and is satisfied with wonder, is the quality of an idiot.

BEAUTIFUL and right it is that gifts and good wishes should fill the air like snowflakes at Christmas-tide. And beautiful is the year in its coming and in its going—most beautiful and blessed because it is always the Year of Our Lord.

CHARITY should never be brought down to the level of amusement. It should be looked upon as a duty, and as a sacred one that is given to us all, poor or rich, to be done to the best of our ability and means.

THERE is a time when men will not suffer bad things because their ancestors have suffered worse. There is a time when the hoary head of inveterate abuse will neither draw reverence nor obtain protection.

The World's Happenings.

Ostrich feathers have fallen from $300 to $50 a pound.

The Queen of Sweden is regarded as hopelessly insane.

A Grand Rapids, Mich., firm made 300,000 base balls the past season.

The postmaster at Winterport, Me., is appropriately named Snow.

The stages on Fifth avenue, New York, are to be lighted by electricity.

An Iowa woman wants a voter invented who cannot be stuffed with beer, brag or bribery.

A lad in New Castle, Pa., who stopped a farmer's runaway team, was rewarded by the present of a turnip.

The manufacture of false teeth for horses is mentioned as among the industries that are springing up.

A 98-year-old citizen of Andover, N. H., named Thompson, frequently walks a distance of half a mile to get his mail.

Tigers have been encountered this autumn in parts of Asiatic and European Russia where they have never been before.

Chicago is trying the experiment of burning garbage and the refuse of the streets, and the result is said to be very satisfactory.

"Prince of Scotland," it is believed, would have been the title of the infant had the Queen's latest grandchild been a boy.

It would seem the cigarette girl's occupation is gone. A machine has been invented that does all she did, and does it 20 times faster.

Macaroons and taffy are now the toothsome mediums by which the most nauseous of remedies—cod liver oil—may be taken into the system.

The wife of R. F. Sharman, of Terrell county, Wis., is one of five sisters, each of whom has eight children, all being boys with the exception of one.

Little Miss Lizzie Bell Sinclair, of Everettstown, N. J., celebrated her 12th birthday recently by completing a bed quilt that contains 11,250 pieces.

A visitor at a church in a big city, whose members are almost all rich and aged, and therefore conservative, described it as the "Church of Retired Christians."

Piano dealers in Pittsburg propose combining against music teachers to cut down the amount of commissions heretofore paid the latter on sales of pianos.

In Chicago a thief entered a house, and while prowling around fell over a chair and broke his leg, and had to arouse the family and request them to send for a doctor.

Big shipments of raisins are being made from California. A recent train which left Fresno was composed wholly of raisin-laden cars—20 in all—and was decorated with flags and streamers.

A resident of Omaha, who advertised that he had found a handkerchief containing some money in a street car, has since been wrestling with the respective claims of nearly 40 correspondents.

The young lady who ran for the office of School Commissioner in New York and was defeated, seems to have run for the incumbent, and will manage the office after all. She has married him.

Two Tooweoba girls won a prize given last month in Queensland, Australia, for "the best young lady of the colony. It meant the one who could best do all the household duties of a colonial woman.

A tramp who entered a house in East Orange, N. J., last week, and hid in the attic, had the lock turned upon him by a member of the household. A policeman was then telephoned for and the man lodged in the police station.

Aunt Nancy Honaker, of Laynesville, Ky., who is 76 years old, has a mule that she knows is over 40 years old. It came from Virginia 40 years ago, and how old it was then she doesn't know. It still earns its living under the saddle and before a buggy.

The pension roll of the United States is now less by only 40,000 than the roster of the standing army of Germany, and costs within $10,000,000 as much annually. It exceeds by $10,000,000 the total expenditures of our Government in the year before the war.

An Omaha lawyer took a diamond ring as a retainer from a man accused of grand larceny. On his way to luncheon he slipped into a jewelry store to ask what the diamond was worth, and the jeweler identified the ring as one that had been stolen from him.

Mayor Fritchey, of Harrisburg, has adopted a new policy in regard to tramps. If found within the city they are to be arrested and put to work at midnight sweeping the streets. Those who refuse to work will be disciplined by having their meals withheld.

A Kalamazoo parrot has five times frightened burglars off. Its last achievement was a few days ago. The burglar had already unfastened the door and was about to enter, when the bird sternly inquired: "Hello there! What's the matter?" The visitor made so much noise in his hurry to get away that he awakened the household.

A Romeo and Juliet tragedy actually occurred recently in London. An elderly French lover swallowed poison and seemed to be dying. The Juliet seized the poison bottle and drank a deadly draught. She died. The man recovered, and discovered to his horror that his Juliet was dead. After trying in vain to resuscitate her he seized a revolver and shot himself through the heart.

While a number of Indians were taking a ride on the platform of a mail car near Pocatello, Utah, recently, the trainmen noticed that one of redskins was shunned by all the others. The grimaces of disgust bestowed upon the ostracized member of the party led to an investigation, which revealed that the lonely one was a tramp disguised as an Indian in order to get free transportation.

TO-DAY.

BY JEAN INGELOW.

O night of nights! O night
  Desired of man so long!
The ancient heavens fled forth in light
  To sing thee thy new song;
And shooting down the steep,
  To shepherd folk of old,
An angel, while they watched their sheep,
  Set foot beside the fold.

It was so long ago;
  But God can make it now,
And as with that sweet overflow,
  Our empty hearts endow.
Take, Lord, these words outworn,
  Oh, make them new for aye,
Speak—"Unto you a child is born,"
  To-day—to-day—to-day!

About a Fog.

BY MRS. MOLESWORTH.

THEY had all come up to grandfather's for Christmas. They had been delighted at the idea of leaving the country, even with all its winter enchantments, for to children who knew nothing of London except what they had seen from the windows of a four-wheeler, as they drove from one station to another, the anticipations of toy-shops and pantomimes, of possible visits to the Tower and to Madame Tussaud's, threw skating and snow-balling, school feasts and murmurs into the shade.

Patty went so far as to confide to Louis that merely to watch the lamplighter going his rounds, or to hear the rat-tat-tat of the peremptory postman at the door was worth coming to London for; and Louis, though he did not own to agreeing with her, at least refrained from snubbing her, which from him meant a good deal.

And the first two or three days were in every sense a success. Even the weather was propitious. It was clear and bright; so clear and bright that grandfather told little Gwen, his special pet, that he felt sure she had privately brought away a bottleful of country sunshine and uncorked it on her arrival. Gwen stared at him.

"A bottleful, grandfather!" she repeated. "It would have to be a very big bottle to hold enough to go all over London."

"Perhaps it's like the smoky stuff in the bottles in the Arabian Nights," said Bryan. "It puffed out and puffed out, you know, till it was a great giant that filled the sky. But I hope it won't be sunshine all the time we're here, grandfather. I want to see a fog—a real good London fog."

"My dear boy!" his mother exclaimed.

And "speak for yourself," said his father. "When you have not only seen but smelt and tasted and felt a fog, I don't think you will wish to repeat the experiment."

But this warning only made Bryan more curious to experience a fog for himself.

He had not long to wait.

One of the peculiarities of fogs—London ones, it seems to me, especially—is their extraordinary suddenness. We go to bed, remarking to each other as we say, "good-night," "What a lovely, clear starlight or moonlight sky!" and we wake up the next morning thinking we have made a great mistake in waking up at all; that it cannot possibly be "to-morrow morning," or at any rate not to-morrow morning in the sense of getting-up time.

And then comes the housemaid's tap at the door; and though still too sleepy to ask any questions, we become slowly aware of the true state of things. For the blinds drawing up makes no difference; the room remains as gloomy as before. "It must be a fog," we murmur to ourselves, with a sort of despair.

And much more suddenly than in the course of a night do they come sometimes. I remember once entering a shop in clear, afternoon daylight, and by the time my ten minutes' shopping was over and I turned to leave, lo and behold! the gas lamps were being lighted along the avenues of counters, and the street outside was black, as if some ill-natured fairy had suddenly drawn a thick curtain over the roofs of the houses, so as to shut us out from sky and sun and light altogether.

Bryan's fog came on almost as suddenly. It was the fourth morning of the children's visit, and, like its three predecessors, it broke clearly bright and frosty. But as they were finishing breakfast the daylight began to fail, and almost before the children understood what was the matter, the servants were calmly placing candles on the table, and their grandfather turned to Bryan with a smile.

"There, my boy," he said; "you're going to have your wish. We're in for a fog; a regular pea-soup one, too, I fancy."

And so it was. At first the children thought it very good fun; they ran about the house, staring out of the windows to see at which side it was thickest; they helped the servants to light the gas and lamps, and were finally caught at the front door, which they had opened in the ardor of their curiosity, thereby letting all the fog into the house.

And they were very much disappointed when their mother firmly refused to let them all go out for a walk.

"It would be such fun!" said Bryan and Patty, and Louis looked as if he agreed with them, though he would not condescend to say so.

"Great fun!" mamma replied; "great fun, indeed, to have you all laid up for the rest of our time here with sore throats, and coughs, and ailments of every kind!"

Patty opened her eyes.

"Do fogs give illnesses like that?" she said. "It must be very bad for papa to go out then, for his sore throats are worser than ours."

Louis nudged her, for he saw his mother's face grow uneasy.

"What's the good of your saying that?" he whispered. "Don't you see mother is already vexed at papa's having had to go out. Will papa be back soon, mamma?" he asked.

"I hope so," she replied. "He had to go to the city on business, but I hope he will be back, if not to luncheon, at least soon after. He wrapped himself up well, I hope. Did any of you notice?"

"Oh, yes," Bryan replied. "He put a handkerchief round his throat, and he turned up the collar of his coat. I was at the door when he went. I saw several people passing, looking so funny, all muffled up; and they seem so big somehow. There's a lamp just outside, and it's lovely to watch the figures passing. I wish we might open the door just a teeny chink, mamma, to peep out by."

"No, indeed," hard-hearted mamma replied; "you must content yourselves by peeping out of the dining-room windows."

And so they had to do, though it was not so charming as the front door would have been, as it was further back from the street, with the area intervening.

Long before luncheon-time Bryan began to modify his ideas as to the delight of a fog.

"Of course," he said to the others, unwilling to allow that he had changed, "it would be awfully jolly if we might go out and see it all for ourselves. Nobody could like to be mewed up in the house all day."

And by luncheon-time all four were looking so tired of themselves and of everything, that mamma had to set to work to find some amusement and occupations for them, to help to pass the time; and they got on pretty well till the hour for tea, which again took up some twenty minutes or more, after which, as usual, they all went to the drawing-room.

Grandfather and mamma were there alone. Mamma looked rather pale and anxious. But everybody looked more or less pale. What wonder!

"Will the fog be gone by to-morrow morning? said Patty, disconsolately. "I don't know what we shall do if we have to be a whole 'nother day in the dark."

"'Cept for the candles and the gas," said Gwen.

"I hope it will be gone," said grandfather, "and it is not often that it lasts so bad more than a day. Geraldine, my dear," he went on, turning to the children's mother, who had pulled back one of the window-curtains, and was standing pressing her face against the panes, looking out, or trying to look out, "I wish you would believe me. You need not be uneasy about Arthur. There is really no cause for being so."

Mamma drew the curtain together again, and came back to the fire.

"I know it is silly of me to be uneasy," she said. "It is not so much any possible accident I am thinking of, as Arthur's throat; and he did say he would be back by three or four at latest."

"A hundred things may have detained him," her father replied; "and, of course, locomotion of any kind is not easy in a fog like this. I hardly think I have ever seen a worse one—not certainly for a great many years. That reminds me——"

And grandfather looked round the little group of his daughter and her four children. On her face he could still read anxiety. By the children's expressions it was easy to descry that they were feeling both tired and disappointed. But a sudden gleam of interest woke up his last words.

"Reminds you of what, grandfather?" asked Bryan.

"Can you think of a story to tell us, p'raps?" added little Gwen, coaxingly.

Grandfather smiled. He was glad that the idea had been started, for he was very anxious that this, the children's first visit to him in London, should be a most thoroughly happy one, and a story, however simple, might beguile away some of the interval till bedtime, and serve the purpose, too, of making their mother forget her anxiety.

"It's not worth calling a story," he replied. "It was a curious thing that happened to me once many years ago. I had almost forgotten about it till your all talking so much about the fog—we Londoners, you see, take fogs in a more matter-of-course way—and your uneasiness about Arthur, Geraldine, put it in my head. It must be now—let me see, how many years ago—twenty, thirty—no, indeed, still more——"

"A hundred, do you think, grandfather?" whispered Gwen. "You are more than a hundred years old, ain't you?"

"Gwen, how rude you are!" Patty exclaimed; but grandfather drew Gwen close to him, and stroked her head, for she almost looked as if she were going to cry.

"No, my little girl," he said. "I am not quite as old as that. Still I am "getting on," and I feel this more when I look back and remember that thirty-five years ago—for if must be as long as that—I was already a full-grown man. I had at that time lived very little in London, for I had been a good many years on the Continent, first at school, and then again, after a few years' interval, as attaché at one of our embassies; and though I had returned to England, and had taken up quite another line, still I was not often in London, for my home was by this time in one of the northern countries, though now and then I had to come up for a day or two together on business. This was the case at the time I am going to tell you about. It was late November, and in those days I really do think fogs were much more confined to that month than they are now. As it happened, it was the first time I had ever been in London at that season, and, like Bryan, I had rather a curiosity to see a regular good pea-soup fog. I was staying with some cousins in one of the even then rather old-fashioned squares, which are now almost quite deserted by the upper classes. More's the pity, I often think, for the houses were excellent ones, warm in winter, and cool in summer. You don't see such building nowadays. And I had had to spend most of my time in the city. But this particular day I had not required to go quite so far, as it was my last before returning north, and all my business was finished. There only remained a visit to the lawyer of the firm in which I was a partner, and whom I had been asked to see to explain some matters to. His office was in Lincoln's Inn, and I had quite enjoyed my walk there early in the afternoon, for it was a clear and pleasant day, especially considering it was November."

Here Gwen, whose face had been growing longer and longer, suddenly interrupted.

"Grandpapa," she said, "I don't mean to be rude; but I don't like your story much. I don't understand all you say."

"I'm very sorry, dear," said her grandfather, "I'm afraid I have been forgetting whom I was telling it to. Never mind, however, I am coming to a more interesting part now. Well, as I was saying, it was a pleasant enough day when I went in to see the lawyer; but while I was talking to him I noticed that it was getting darker, till at last we could not see each other's faces, and the gas had to be lighted.

"'We're going to have a fog,' said Mr. Greene, 'and a pretty bad one, I fancy, by the way the wind is. We've had a few days clear, so I suppose we mustn't grumble.'

"'I have never seen a regular London fog, I replied, 'so I shall not be sorry.'

"'Indeed,' said Mr. Greene, just as I said to Bryan this morning, 'I don't think you'll care to repeat the experience.'

"And so saying he opened the door of the room, and accompanied me to the front one.

"'I'll have a look out myself at the state of things,' he said. 'Yes, indeed, we're in for it and no mistake, Mr. Murray.'"

"That's you! Mr. Murray's you, isn't it, grandfather?" said Gwen, feeling sure now that she was beginning to understand it all.

Grandfather nodded and smiled.

"I really felt quite startled myself when I looked out. It was not so bad as it got to be, but to me it seemed pretty thick.

"'You'd better make the best of your way home,' Mr. Greene said. 'It is evidently getting worse, and even for those most familiar with the streets it is very bewildering.'

"'Oh, I'm not afraid of losing my way,' I replied confidently, and then I set off.

"I got on pretty well for a while, even though the fog kept coming down thicker and thicker. At least I thought I was getting on all right, when I came to a certain corner, where the lights of a shop gleaming out a few paces off into the brown murky mist made me pull up.

"'There shouldn't be a shop here,' I said to myself; and, after considering a moment, I went in and inquired where I was. The shop people named a street I had never heard of, and a little more inquiry proved to me that I had been coming along in an exactly contrary direction from what I had imagined. They explained to me where I had got wrong, and of course but for the fog it would have been easy enough to get right again; but as it was I felt rather disheartened when I found myself once more in the street.

"'Upon my word,' I said to myself, after a step or two, 'I don't believe I shall get to ——Square to-day! It is very awkward.'

"I spoke aloud, almost without knowing it. Suddenly a voice came out of the fog, and a figure drew near me.

"'Do you want a guide, sir?' To —— Square, I think you said. I'll take you, as straight as an arrow, for a half, or whatever you please to make it.'

"I looked at the man—at all I could see of him, that is to say. He was decently dressed, and, though muffled up like everybody else, there was nothing rough or forbidding about him.

"'How will you manage that?' I said.

"The man drew an old silk handkerchief out of his pocket.

"'You hold on to one end of this,' he said, "I'll hold on to the other. You just come after me: that's all you've got to do, sir. I'll take you safe and sound to —— Square, you'll see.'

"I did as he said, and we set off. We would have looked very funny had it been possible to see us, but as it was, if anyone had walked along the streets on his head, the fog was now so thick that it would not have been distinguished. Once or twice we nearly bumped against other foot-passengers—carriages of any kind by this time there were none—but we did not hurt ourselves or them, as everybody was coming along very cautiously. It seemed to me that we—my strange guide and I—got over the ground much more quickly than other people. He never hesitated, but kept on steadily at the same pace. This I could feel rather than see, for except for the handkerchief, we should long ago have been separated. I could only occasionally distinguish the figure before me at all. He rarely spoke, only now and then I felt him tug the handkerchief to make sure, I suppose, that I was still there, to which every time I replied—'All right!' at which he would say—'Thankee, sir,' and be off again with renewed energy.

"I had not the least idea where we were, nor even how far we had come. The man might have been leading me into some thieves' den, for all I know; but I did not feel afraid, for I had only to let go of the handkerchief at any moment to be free; and besides this, there is one advantage in a fog—you can always escape from anybody.

"On and on we plodded. Oh, dear, how cold and uncomfortable it was!

"'Catch me wishing for a fog again,' I said to myself. Suddenly I felt the strain of the handkerchief loosen; my guide had stopped.

"'We're close to it, now, sir," he said; "this is the corner of——Square. Your place must be near the corner—No. 99, I think you said.'

"'Yes,' I replied, and as he moved on a little more slowly than hitherto I pulled up.

"'Hullo, stop there!' I cried. "Here's No. 99,' for the light behind the glass at the top of the door streamed out sufficiently for me to distinguish the figures. The fog, too, seemed to me to be clearing a very little.

"In another moment I had rung the bell; the door was opened almost immediately. My aunt had been getting rather uneasy about me, and I can tell you I was not sorry to find myself in the well-lighted hall, where a fire was burning and the air was fit to breathe. I looked round for my guide; he was following close behind.

"'Come in and shut the door,' I said. "You may as well warm yourself for a moment.'

"'Thankee, sir," said the man, shutting

the door as he spoke, rather clumsily, it seemed; and he did not come near the fire. I got out my purse; I felt sorry for the poor fellow, and grateful to him. So instead of the money promised I held out a larger coin.

"'Here,' I said, 'I've been better than my word, you see.'

"He did not come forward; he only stretched out his hand in a vague sort of way.

"'What a queer fellow!' I thought; 'can he be a little out of his mind.' But even as the idea passed through my head the mystery was explained.

"'Would you,' said he, 'would you kindly put it into my hand, sir? I am quite blind?'

"'Blind!' I exclaimed, 'and yet you guided me here?'

"'Of course,' he replied, with a rather melancholy little laugh. 'Fog's no matter to me—can't make it darker than it is already. And I know my way in this part of London that perfect 'un never put out. I've had a good few jobs as fog-guide in my time.'

"I put the money into his hand. I was just going to repeat my invitation to the poor chap to warm himself and rest a little, when I heard my aunt calling to ask if I had come in. The servant hurried towards her, and I followed, and a moment later, when I came back again, the man had already gone! Poor fellow! he seemed to have thought himself well paid, and so perhaps he was; but I always felt sorry not to have spoken to him more, and found out something of his history and circumstances. For I never saw or heard of him again; and even when, happening once to find myself near the street where I had met him, I inquired at the corner shop about him, I could hear nothing. The people had never heard of such a person, and stared at me as if I was rather out of my mind, when I related the story."

"How very curious it was!" said the children's mother.

"I'd awfully like to try," said Bryan, "whether I could find my way better in a fog if I tied a handkerchief round my eyes, and pretended to be blind."

"Rubbish!" said Louis; "pretending wouldn't be the same thing at all. Really blind people, I've heard, have it made up to them in a way, by their other senses becoming quicker and——"

But Louis's further dissertation was cut short by the door opening.

"Arthur! Papa," exclaimed the children and their mother all together, joyfully, "how did you get home?"

"All right," he replied; "the fog is nearly gone, the cabs and carriages are going about again. But what a day of it we've had! There has rarely been a denser fog known."

"Not for thirty-five years; isn't that right, grandfather?" said little Gwen, to everybody's surprise. "Oh, papa, grandfather's been telling us such a queer, nice story about a fog, and it's made the time pass so quick till you came home."

The Prince's Quest.

BY A. G. R.

ONCE upon a time there lived a Prince who ought to have been very happy, but wasn't. He reigned in a gorgeous palace, and was rich, and powerful, and great, and had everything he wanted—that is, at least, he had everything he wanted, except the one thing that he wanted more than anything else on earth, and to obtain which he would have given half his kingdom.

He would have given the whole, for the matter of that, only he had already promised the other half to any one who would tell him what it was he wanted.

Everybody had a guess at it, but nobody seemed able to hit upon it. Everything that was suggested he had; everything that wealth could buy, or skill procure, was his already.

So at last he appealed to the wise men of the city, and they put their heads together, and found out the wrong thing, and the Prince became more despondent than ever.

In the palace his jovial companions made laugh and jest, and kept the walls for ever echoing to the tune of their noisy merriment.

All day long they hunted the deer in the forest glades, or rode a-hawking in gay cavalcade; and at night there were feasting, and dancing, and song, and the wine ran free, and the mirth ran high, and happiness beamed upon every face except the Prince's.

In the midst of all the revelry he sat silent and apart, or shunned the chase to muse alone on what this thing could be, the want of which, with all his wealth, made life seem so unfinished.

"Oh, is there nothing that will fill this aching void within me?" sighed the Prince aloud, one day, as he threw himself down on the ground beside a fallen tree. "Oh, is there no one who can tell me what I want?"

"I can."

It was a little old man that spoke; a little, bent, withered old man, with wrinkled face and snow-white hair; but his eyes were brighter than a boy's, and his voice was as clear as a sweet-toned bell, and, as he looked down at the Prince from his seat on the tree, he laughed a merry, childish laugh.

The Prince looked up at him, and wondered how he got there, but was too surprised to speak, and only stared in silence at the merry, twinkling eyes.

"Well," said the little old fellow after a while, "shall I tell you? Would you like to know what it is you want, or have you come to the sensible conclusion that after all it isn't worth the knowing? I think you'd better not know," he went on, changing from gay to grave. "It may make you only more unhappy. It will bring you pain and trouble. You are young and weak—why seek to know? Rest with the happiness you have, child. Joy is only reach through sorrow."

But the Prince heeded not warning. All eagerness and hope, he started up, and caught the old man by the hand, and would not let him go.

"Tell me, you who are wise, and who know," cried he; "tell me what will ease this gnawing pain, or I shall die. Tell me, and I will seek for it through fire and water. I am strong, not weak—strong to dare, to suffer, and to win. I will find it, if it take me all my life, and cost me all my treasure."

The old man gently laid his hand upon the Prince's head, and a look of pity was in the bright, quick eyes.

"Lad," said he, and his voice was grave and tender, "thou shalt seek thy wish. Thou shalt toil for it, and thy brain shall ache. Thou shalt wait for it, and thy heart shall pant. Thou shalt pass through sorrow and through suffering on thy search; but when thou art weary and footsore the thought of it shall strengthen thee, when thy heart is heaviest the hope of it shall raise thee up, and in thy darkest hour it shall come to thee as the touch of a mighty hand. Prince, it is Love thou lackest. Go seek it."

So the scales fell from the Prince's eyes, and he stood as one that has suddenly emerged from darkness into light, half-bewildered before he understood. Then stretching out his arms, he called to Love, as though he would draw her down from heaven, and clasp her to his heart.

"Oh, Love," he cried, "why have I been so blind as not to know thy messenger, who spoke within me? I might have wandered lonely all my life, uncaring and uncared-for, and never dreamed of thy dear presence, nor ever have known that 'twas for need of thy sweet voice that all the world seemed drear."

Full of gratitude, he turned to thank his mysterious guide, but the little old man was gone.

The Prince's own sentinels scarcely knew their lord when he returned to the palace, and even the old hall-porter who, twenty years ago, had rocked him on his knee, looked hard at him, and seemed inclined to challenge his breathless entrance.

Never was a man so changed in half an hour before. Out into the woods had gone a moody, sorrowful youth, with wavering steps and dreamy, downcast eyes, while back had come a gallant Prince, with quick, firm tread, and head thrown back, and eyes that flashed with high resolve. Small wonder if the porter was in doubt.

In the banquet-hall his guests already waited his arrival, and hurrying thither straight, without a word he passed up the crowded room until he reached the dais at the end, and there he turned and spoke:

"Friends," said the Prince, "rejoice with me, for to-day I have learnt the thing that I want. To-day I have found what is the only thing on earth that can make me happy—the only thing on earth I have not got—the only thing I cannot do without, and that I mean to seek for till I have found. Let all my true friends join me, and at to-morrow's dawn we will start to search the world for Love."

Then one and all cheered loud and long, and swore that each was his loyal friend, and swore that they would follow him throughout the whole wide world, and they drank a bumper to success, and another one to Love, and never in that palace had a banquet been so gay, and never before had such merry guests feasted in that hall.

Long into the night they drank and sang, and their loud laughter filled the palace full, and overflowed through open door and window out into the stillness, and the red deer browsing heard it, and scudded away down the moonlit glens, nor dreamt then of the time when they would fearlessly crop the grass round the very walls of the palace, and rest secure and undisturbed upon its weed-grown terraces.

But no shadow of the coming gloom marred the glittering pageantry on which the morning sun threw down his glory, as gay with silk, and flashing steel, and fluttering plumes, and prancing steeds the gallant train of knights and squires rode slowly down the hill.

And hearts were light and hopes were high, but no heart so light as the Prince's, no hopes so high as his, as he rode at the head of that gay throng, the gayest of them all.

At each place that they came to the Prince enquired for Love, but found to his astonishment, that, though people talked about her a good deal, hardly any one knew her. Few spoke of her as a reality.

Most folks looked upon her as a joke; others, as a popular delusion; while the one or two who owned to having known her seemed half ashamed of the acquaintanceship.

There were shams and imitations in abundance, but the real thing, when acknowledged, was considered vulgar, and no one knew or cared what become of her.

The first place at which they halted was the town of Common-Sense—a most uncomfortable place, all full of close and narrow streets that led to nowhere, and inhabited by a race celebrated for the strength of their lungs, it being reckoned that one man of Common-Sense was equal to a dozen poll-parrots, and could talk down fifty men of intelligence (their natural enemies) in less than half an hour.

The religion of this charming people was touching in its simplicity. It consisted of a firm and earnest belief that they were infallible, and that everybody else was a fool; and each man worshipped himself.

They were quite indignant when the Prince asked them where Love was.

"We know nothing at all about her," said the men of Common-Sense. "What have we to do with Love? What do you take us for?"

The Prince was too polite to tell them what he took them for, so merely bidding them adieu with a pitying smile, rode off to seek elsewhere for Love.

But he had no better luck at the next place they came to. This was Tom Tiddler's Land, and the people there were very busy indeed.

So busy were they, picking up the gold and the silver, that they hadn't time even to make themselves respectable, and their hands were especially dirty—but then it was rather dirty work.

"Love!" said the people of Tom Tiddler's Land. "We don't keep it. Never heard of it. Don't know what it is. But dare say we could get it for you. What are you willing to go to for it?"

"You can't buy it," explained the Prince. "It is given."

"Then you won't get it here, young man," was the curt reply; and they went on with their grovelling.

At last the Prince came to the City of Science, where he was most hospitably received, and where for the first time he learnt the great truth that everything is just precisely what one always thought it wasn't, and that nothing is what one thinks it is.

The inhabitants were all philosophers, and their occupation consisted of finding out things that nobody wanted to know, and in each day proving that what they themselves had stated the day before was wrong.

They were very clever people, and knew everything—Love included. She was there, in the city, they told the delighted Prince, and they would take him to her.

So, after showing him over the town and explaining to him what everything wasn't, they took him into their museum, which was full of the most wonderful things, and in the centre was Love—the most wonderful of them all.

The Prince couldn't help laughing when he saw it, but the philosophers were very proud of it. It sat upright and stiff on a straight-backed chair, and was as cold as ice.

"Made it ourselves," said the philosophers. "Isn't it beautiful! Acts by clockwork, and never goes wrong. Warranted perfect in every respect. We have a special committee of old ladies to look after it, and it has been highly recommended by the clergy."

"It's very charming," answered the Prince, trying to swallow down his disappointment; "but I'm afraid it's not the sort of thing I wanted."

"Why, what's amiss with it? It's got all the lastest improvements."

"Yes," replied the Prince with a sigh, "that's just it; I wanted it with all the old faults."

Again the Prince journeyed on, and came to the town of Society, where lived a very knowing sort of people called "Men of the World," who had the reputation of "knowing their way about"—a reputation, the acquirement of which it was difficult to understand, seeing they never by any chance, went outside their own town—a remarkably small one, although the inhabitants firmly believed that it was the biggest and most important place on earth, and that no other city was worth living in for a day.

A dim oil-lamp burnt night and day in the centre of the town, and the people of Society were under the impression that all light came from that, for as they crawled about on their hands and knees, and never raised their eyes from the ground, they knew nothing about the sun.

When they had crawled once forwards and backwards across their little town, they thought they had seen "life," and would squat in a corner, and yawn, till they died.

When the Prince mentioned the name of Love to these creatures, they burst into a coarse, loud laugh.

"Is that what you call it?" said they. "Why, wherever do you come from? We know what you mean, though. Come along."

And they took him into a dingy room, and showed him a hideous, painted thing that made him sick to look upon.

"Let us leave this place quickly," said the Prince, turning to his followers. "I cannot breathe in this foul air. Let us get out into God's light. So they mounted in haste and rode away, leaving the men who "knew their way about" crawling about the ways they knew so well.

Farther and farther into the weary world wandered the Prince on his search; but Love was still no nearer, and though his heart was ever brave, it beat less hopefully every day.

Time after time he heard of her, and started off, only to find some worthless sham—a golden image—a dressed-up doll—a lifeless statue—a giggling fool. Shams, shams, shams! Shams wherever he went, and men and women worshipping, and hugging them close to their breasts—fighting for them, living for them, and knowing all the while that they were shams; and each time the Prince turned away, more sick at heart than ever.

Only a thin remnant of all that brilliant host which years ago had started full of hope and enterprise, now rode beside the saddened Prince, and, as they toiled on wearily from place to place, the few grew fewer still.

Once they came to a place where Love had really been; but that was long ago, and now she had gone, no one knew whither. It was the City of Romance, and all the citizens were poets.

"Ah," said one white-haired old man, whom the Prince stopped to question without the gates, "I knew her well. She reigned here, happy and contented, when I was young; but these new fellows—they have frightened her away. They never let her rest a minute, but worried her to death."

"One day they would all be worshipping her, and the next they'd call her names, and want to kill her. On Monday she was a saint, and on Tuesday a devil. They made out that she was the cause of all the stupid things they did, and a man couldn't have the gout, or feel a little unsteady after dinner, but she was blamed for it; and when they told her that everyone who met her either immediately died or committed suicide, the poor little thing got so unhappy that she ran away, and we've never seen her since. I don't think they were very sorry. They did'nt understand her any more than anybody can understand them. They've filled up her place, now, with a miserable half-dead-and-alive creature, as much like Love as vinegar is like wine, and the way they talk to her is really quite indelicate. Between you and me," continued the old man, "there is a lot of nonsense talked here," and the old poet hobbled away towards the city.

And now, not a single one of all who had shouted their loyalty so loudly was left, when weary, baffled, and disheartened, the Prince at last turned back.

A great longing was upon him to be once more among his own people, and to see his own land again; and so, with this last hope, he still toiled on, and each day pressed on quicker, fearing lest death might overtake him by the way, and that his tired eyes never more would rest upon the old grey towers and sweet green woods of home.

But the dreary road came to an end at length, and one evening he looked down upon his palace, as it lay before him bathed in the red of the sinking sun.

Restful, now, he stood for a while, feasting his hungry eyes upon the longed-for sight, and then his thoughts ebbed slowly back to that morning, long ago, when he had bidden it adieu, and had ridden forth into the world upon his quest for Love.

But ah! How changed the place! How changed himself since then!

He had left it as a gallant Prince with all the pride of pomp around him, and a gaudy throng of flattering courtiers at his side.

He crept back, broken-hearted and alone. He had left it standing fair and stately in the morning light, and bright with life and sound; now it was ruined, desolate, and silent; the bats flew out of the banquet-hall, and the grass grew on the hearths.

Another had usurped his throne; his people had forgotten him, and not even a dog was there to give him a welcome.

As he passed through the damp, chill rooms a thousand echoing footsteps started up on every side, as though his entrance had disturbed some ghostly revel, and when, having reached a little room that in old times he had been wont to go to for solitude, he entered, and shut himself in, it seemed as though the frightened spirits had hurried away, slamming a thousand doors behind them.

It was in the glad season of Christmas that he returned and there, in the darkness, he sat himself down, and buried his face in his hands, and wept; and sat there long through the silent hours, lost in his own bitter thoughts.

So lost, that he did not hear a gentle tapping at the door—did not hear the door open, and a timid voice asking to come in—did not hear a light step close beside him, nor see a little maiden sit herself down at his feet—did not know she was there till, at last, with a sigh, he raised his head and looked into the gloom. Then his eyes met hers, and he started, and looked down at the sweet, shy face, amazed and half in doubt.

"Why, you are Love!" said the Prince, taking her little hands in his. "Where have you been, sweet? I've sought you everywhere."

"Not everywhere," said Love, nestling against him with a little half-sad laugh; "not everywhere. I've been here all the time. I was here when you went away, and I've been waiting for you here at home to come back—so long."

And so the Prince's quest was ended.

EXCHANGING PRESENTS.—A young bride signing herself Clearista makes a proposal for the establishment of a bureau for the exchange of superfluous wedding presents. She says no complaints can be made of any increase of the number or value of such presents, but of their annoying sameness. She was surprised on her wedding day by the display of twelve dozens of tablespoons, sixteen traveling watches, thirteen toast-tongs, eleven gong-gongs, etc.

But she is neither given to large dinners, where 144 spoons might be useful, nor to traveling with sixteen watches in her pockets, nor crammming herself with toast, and as she does not inhabitant a very extensive mansion she can manage to take her seat at the dinner table without being called by eleven-gongs. So she proposes there should be one day a month to bring together the newly married with their carts of presents for the purpose of exchanging.

NOVEL USES OF PAPER.

THERE are few things that cannot now be made out of paper. Its adaptability is astonishing, and the wildest speculations as to its future are excusable when we reflect upon the present uses of this material. As the delicate substance can be made to serve for steel or iron, it is not difficult to understand how paper is, for many purposes, now taking the place of wood.

Paper made from strong fibres, such as linen, can, in fact, be compressed into a substance so hard that it can hardly be scratched. As houses have been made of this novel building material, so almost everything requisite to complete and furnish a residence has since been manufactured of paper.

After the Breslau fire-proof chimney, it is quite possible, for instance, that cooking or heating stoves can be made of similar materials. These paper stoves are annealed—that is, painted over with a composition which becomes part of the paper, and is fire-proof. It is said to be impossible to burn them out, and they are much cheaper than iron stoves.

Bath-tubs and pots are made in the same manner by compressing the paper made of linen fibres, and annealing. The tubs, we are assured, will last forever, and never leak. Placed on a fire, they will not burn up; and it is almost impossible to break or injure them.

Our rooms, too, can be floored with this wonderfully accommodating material. It may here be mentioned that cracks in floors and around the skirting board of a room, may be neatly and permanently filled by thoroughly soaking newspapers in paste made of one pound of flour, three quarts of water, and a tablespoonful of alum, thoroughly boiled and mixed. The mixture will be about as thick as putty, and may be forced into the cracks with a case-knife. It will harden like papier-mache.

Doors, which one would think were polished mahogany but that they swing so lightly, and are free from swelling, cracking, or warping, are composed each of two thick boards, stamped and molded into panels, and glued together with glue and potash, and then rolled through heavy rollers. These doors are first covered with a waterproof coating, then painted and varnished and hung in the ordinary way. Few persons can detect that they are not made of wood, particularly when used as sliding-doors.

Black walnut is said to be getting very scarce in this country; but picture-frames are now made of paper, and colored like walnut, and are so perfect that no one could detect them without cutting them. Paper-pulp, glue, linseed oil, and carbonate of lime or whiting, are mixed together and heated into a thick cream, which on being allowed to cool is run into moulds and hardened.

Drawing-rooms can be set off by handsome pianos manufactured from paper—a French invention. A beautiful musical instrument of this kind has lately been an object of great curiosity to the connoisseurs and musical savants of Paris. The entire case is made of compressed paper, to which is given a hard surface and a brilliant cream-white polish. The legs and sides are ornamented with arabesques and floral designs. The exterior, and as much of the interior as can be seen when the instrument is open, are covered with wreaths and medallions painted in miniature by some of the leading artists of Paris. The tone of this instrument is said to be of excellent quality, though not loud. The broken, alternating character of piano music is replaced by a rich, full, continuous roll of sound, resembling somewhat that of the organ. Only two of these instruments have been made.

Our correspondence may be conducted through the medium of the latest novelties in note-paper. We have had the "ragged edge", in imitation of the hand-made paper of long ago; and now we have the Parmographic, an exaggeration of the same idea. The edges are charred and torn, and the surface of the paper lime-stained. A buyer might call it dirty, but it is only "artistic". There is also a dull red paper with silver and gold dots sprinkled over it, and another with stars, in imitation of certain wall-papers. A thin and rather pretty paper is "the hammered silver", with water-marks representing the lines in hammered silver-work. The morocco, alligator, and calf papers, embossed to imitate the surface of those leathers, are also interesting novelties.

Notes can be jotted down with the paper pencils made in Germany. The paper is steeped in an adhesive liquid, and rolled around the lead to the required thickness, then dried and colored to resemble a cedar pencil.

Paper plates, introduced by an ingenious *restaurateur* of Berlin, can now be used. Bread and butter, cakes, and similar articles were served by him on a pretty papier-mache plate, having a border in relief, and resembling porcelain. They are cheap and light, and not liable to be broken.

Even knives and forks may now, we are told, be made of compressed paper. They can be used for any practical purpose, like steel ones.

The household cutlery, it may here be mentioned, can be well preserved if wrapped up in paper prepared from oatmeal. This waxed paper is largely used in New York for wrapping hardware. Candles, fish, butter, and a score of other articles are also thus wrapped, and saved from injury through dampness.

Our household may also be supplied with the paper bottles now made in Germany and Austria. The paper is coated on both sides with a mixture of blood-albumen, lime, and alum. After drying, the leaves are placed over each other, and then put into heated moulds. These bottles are made in two pieces which are afterwards joined. Neither water nor alcohol has any action on such bottles, and it is thought that they will prove of great value to travellers, as there is little fear of breakage.

Our sleeping apartments can be provided with paper bed-clothes, curtains, and bedsteads. The latter pieces of furniture look beautiful, and are declared to be everlasting. They are made of slips of paper, instead of paper rings, as in the case of railway wheels.

These railway wheels can now run on rails of the same material, some new particulars of which have come to hand. These, it is stated, can be produced—by an American company in Russia—at a third of the cost of steel rails, and are extremely durable. Being much lighter than metal, these rails may be carried and laid at a far less cost, and they will doubtless diminish oscillation and wear and tear of rolling-stock. They are to be made of greater lengths than ordinary rails, and, therefore, will have fewer joints. The success or failure of the project seems simply a question of durability.

A sofa, no doubt, will be found the small house trunk on wheels, used for wheeling loads around the house. The sides and bottom of this are very thin, but made of finely compressed paper, capable of bearing a very great weight.

In short, so universal is the application of this extraordinary substance, that the time seems not far distant when we may be living in a paper house, clad in paper clothes, sitting on a paper chair, writing at a paper desk, with a patent paper pen on some novel kind of paper.

OF COMMON SPICES.

AT no time of the year do the spices play a more important part than about Christmas.

Nothing is known of how they first came into use, but they have been greatly esteemed from the very earliest times; and a small quantity of spice was considered a present worthy of being offered to a king. The Queen of Sheba brought gold, spices, and precious stones as her offering to Solomon.

None of the spice-bearing trees grow in Palestine, so all had to be brought from long distances, probably many of them, such as cassia and cinnamon, from China. In the Bible, "frankincense" is often used as a general term for all Eastern spices. They were chiefly required for the compounding of the perfumes so universally used by all Eastern nations.

Coming down to later days, in the early history of England the "Spicery" was a special department of the Court, with its own officers.

Spices were rare and costly, and were chiefly imported from the Levant. Though not in common use, owing to their costliness, Chaucer alludes to them in a way which proves that they were well known and valued. He speaks of nutmegs, clowes (cloves), macys (mace), canella (cinnamon), and ginger.

The nutmeg-fruit is in size and shape remarkably like a peach, but of brighter yellow color, and smooth-skinned like a plum. When the fruit is cut open, you see inside it a nut like the stone of a peach, but rather larger and rounder. The stone is almost covered by a bright scarlet network, between the fibres of which you can see the blackish brown kernel inside.

This scarlet coating is what we know as mace. It is peeled off the nut, and dried in the sun, which process makes the mace brittle, and changes the beautiful scarlet color into the dull orange brown, as we know it. When dry it is packed in bales and exported. The nut itself, though brown outside, is white within, but has dark veins running through it, which give it a mottled appearance.

The ginger plant has a creeping underground stem, from which shoots appear above ground at intervals, growing to about three feet high, and bearing pale green leaves shaped like the lily of the valley.

It is this underground root-stalk which we know as ginger. When the stalks and leaves wither, it is ready for digging up. The outer coating is carefully scraped off; the root is washed and dried. Ginger is obtained from almost all parts of the world.

Cloves come from a tree of the myrtle family. The tree bears a great quantity of flowers of a bluish color, with small rounded petals. Cloves are the buds of these flowers gathered before they open, and dried in the smoke of wood fires, which gives them their deep brown color. The drying is completed by laying the buds in the hot sun. By soaking a clove in warm water for some time, one can generally open the petals into their natural position, and so see the exact form of the flower as it would have appeared if allowed to open.

It is a strange fact that if the flowers are left on the tree to open they have no odor at all, and are not in the least aromatic.

Cinnamon is the bark of a species of laurel, which is grown to some extent in Malabar, and other parts of the East Indies, but chiefly in Ceylon. It bears clusters of insignificant greenish-white flowers, followed by a fruit, very much like an acorn, in a six-toothed cup. The trees are examined twice a year, and the branches of three years' growth are cut down, and the thin outer bark having been peeled off, the twigs are cut open lengthwise, and the inner bark gradually loosened with the point of a knife until it can be entirely peeled off. This is partly dried in the shade, then cut into lengths, which are laid one inside the other and dried in the sun. The process of drying curls up the bark till it appears in the tight, compact rolls in which we buy it. It is then examined and tied up in bundles according to quality. The best quality is very thin, and of a yellowish-brown color; the inferior is thicker and less fragrant. The small broken pieces of bark are powdered and distilled to obtain oil of cinnamon, which is extensively used in perfumery.

THE "STAR OF BETHLEHEM."—If one stands facing the north in the early part (nine to twelve o'clock) on any clear night at this time of the year he will easily perceive the constellation of the Great Bear. It will be noticed nearly overhead, though somewhat to the north-west, and it is the most brilliant of all constellations in this part of the heavens.

Its principal stars number seven, and from their shape, as a group, originated the name of "The Dipper." The two bright stars at the end of this constellation farthest from the handle are the "pointers," so called because they are always in a nearly direct line with Polaris, the North Star.

Now, in imagination, draw a line through the pointers and straight to Polaris, thence in an opposite direction to an equal distance, but with the line bearing slightly to the left. The end of this last line will be in the midst of a constellation whose five brightest stars are shaped like the letter W, with the side towards the west somewhat fallen out.

This group of stars marks the opposite outline of the constellation of Cassiopeia, and ought easily to be found. The three brightest stars at the east side form a triangle, or letter V, and midway in the opening and a little toward Polaris the average observer may see a faint star which with the three others make a figure of diamond shape. It is to this faint star that those interested in the "Star of Bethlehem" should direct their observation, for in this immediate vicinity it is expected to appear this or next year.

The observer, with good eyesight, may favorably compete with the professional observer in the look-out for this famous star; for at its last appearance it was first seen with the naked eye, when only an hour previously a telescope had been directed towards it.

THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY.—The secret in having a good roast turkey is to baste it often and to cook it long. So says an excellent authority on practical cooking. A small turkey of seven or eight pounds (the best selection, if fat) should be roasted or baked three hours at least. A very large turkey should not be cooked a minute less than four hours. If properly basted, it will not become dry.

First, then, after the turkey is dressed, season it well, sprinkling salt and pepper on the inside; stuff it and tie it well in shape; either lard the top or lay slices of bacon over it; wet the skin and sprinkle it well with pepper, salt and flour. It is well to allow a turkey to remain some time stuffed before cooking. Pour a little boiling water into the bottom of the dripping pan. If it is to be roasted do not put it too near the coals at first, until it gets well heated through; then gradually draw it nearer.

The excellence of the turkeys depends much upon basting it frequently; occasionally baste it with a little butter, oftener with its own drippings. Just before taking it from the oven put on more melted butter and sprinkle more flour; this will make the skin more crisp and brown. While the turkey is cooking boil the giblets well, chop them fine and mash the liver. When the turkey is done, put it on a hot platter. Put the baking pan on the fire, dredge in a little flour and when cooked stir in a little boiling water or stock; strain, skim off the fat, add the giblets and season with salt and pepper. Beside the gravy, cranberry sauce, currant or plum jelly should always be served with turkey.

A TRICK IN RIFLE SHOOTING.—"Let me enlighten you as to one of the neat little tricks used in fancy shots," recently remarked a noted rifleman, according to a newspaper interview, producing, as he spoke, what appeared to be a brass shell capped with a lead ball. "Looks like a bullet, don't it?" he said, with a laugh. "Well, it isn't. It is simply a papier-mache protuberance appropriately colored to look like lead. Now I'll show you what's behind it." Picking open the end he disclosed to view a quantity of shot—about two hundred he said were in the shell, with just enough powder at the butt to do the work. "How are these used? You have probably witnessed the feat of cracking glass balls thrown in the air by shooting at them with a Winchester and while riding a horse going at a gallop. Well, that's the kind of 'ball' cartridge that is used, and the spectators look on with wonder and admiration, supposing that it is done with a single ball."

NEVER TOO LATE.—The Shepherds led the Pilgrims to Mount Charity, where they showed them a man that had a bundle of cloth lying before him, out of which he cut coats and garments for the poor that stood about him; yet his bundle or roll of cloth was never the less. Then said they, "What should this be?" "This is," said the Shepherds, "to show you, that he who has a heart to give of his labor to the poor shall never want wherewithal. 'He that watereth shall be watered himself.' And the cake that the widow gave to the prophet did not cause that she had the less in her barrel." BUNYAN.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

"On walking," says a good authority, "we have had some experience, and are firmly of the opinion that as a rule the individual is the best judge—all doctors to the contrary notwithstanding. If walking does not over fatigue—and immoderate walking is certainly not advisable—then it is unquestionably a vigorous and healthy exercise. As to how far a person can walk without fatigue, why that must be decided by judicious individual experiment."

At the Pont des Arts in Paris, says a correspondent, is a blind man who carries a board around his neck with this singular sign, "Blind by Birth and by Accident." "See here, my good man," said a passer-by, "your sign is positively distracting. Can you tell us how you happen to be blind by birth and by accident at the same time?" "Easy enough," said the old man. "You see, I'm blind by birth myself, and I've bought out a blind man who did business at the other end of the bridge. He was blind by accident."

A singular petition has been addressed by a group of Vienna citizens to the municipal council. They propose that in order to procure permanent relief for pauper school children, there should be a tax on bachelors. This tax would only be applied to unmarried men in a position to keep a family. The petition says: "If all those who are exempted from military services on account of physical infirmity are obliged to pay a tax, why should those be spared who voluntarily shirk other obligations to the State?

One of the most characteristic street cries of London and of New York is never heard in Paris, nor is one of the most picturesque figures of London and of New York ever seen in the streets of Paris, for in France the noisy and portinacious newsboy is unknown. The functions of this disseminator of intelligence are filled in Paris by the staid old dame who sits at the receipt of custom in a kiosque. A Parisian kiosque has nothing oriental but the name. It is a little sentry-box of glass, just large enough to shelter the news-vender from the changeable weather of the French capital.

Several churches on the West Side, in New York, have arranged for a plan of medical service among the people in that part of the city. Thirty-six dispensaries are to be established in desirable places. The plan is not to make it wholly a charitable work, but a means by which people of small incomes can secure medical attendance at a low cost and medicines at actual cost. Tickets will be issued at the rate of about $5 each to families, and a fee of ten cents a week will entitle the family to medical aid for a year. The plan is said to have been tried with good results in England.

A western paper exposes a neat scheme practised to stretch out the crop of "Florida" oranges. It says: The choicest orange has a dark tinge upon its cheek, as if half stained by an ill-spent bad black. But the ingenious Dago long ago became aware of this fact, so still he trains past all of his best oranges; hence this most desirable dark stained appearance. Nor is this all. After the Florida orange passes away there traces its place as the choicest feature of the market the little blood red orange, sweet and juicy as a Bashan dream. These the artists manufacture by inserting in the neck of a white orange a tiny glass syringe, filled with sweetened alkaline dye. Sewage is washed away.

A prominent physician says that children's school luncheons should not be placed in the old-fashioned lunch basket or tin-box, as bad odors always cling to a much used receptacle. What he recommends is a fresh, clean napkin, wrapped neatly around the bread and butter, or other edibles, and a pasteboard-box to hold it all. The box can then be thrown away when the meal is done. The good sense of this will strike every person given to wholesome living, and it will also delight the box manufacturers, who should immediately get up a cheap little box especially adapted to the conveyance of school luncheons. Parents, no doubt, would be glad to buy those boxes as they buy matches, by the quantity, should they supersede the luncheon basket.

A European importation is the latest charity scheme now being made much of by the benevolently inclined. The plan is one of startling simplicity, being nothing more than requesting your friend Mr. Adam—as the draftsman—to donate a couple of nickels with a promise to ask four Mr. B's of his acquaintance to do the same. The Mr. B's are pledged to secure four Mr. C's, each to do their part in the dime entertainment. Thus sixty four gentleman are contributors to the fund on the third letter of the alphabet, which is, of course, gone through with in the regular order. It is not half a bad idea, for in this way charity touches each pocket-book very gently as she passes. Almost anyone would prefer soliciting ten cents to getting up an evening's entertainment with the necessary discussion. By tacking pencil and paper it will easily be discovered the fortune to be made by rushing down into the X, Y, Z's.

"Regulate the Regulator" with Warner's Log Cabin Sarsaparilla, largest bottle in the market, 120 doses for $1. All druggists.

Our Young Folks.

CURLY LOCKS.

BY S. C.

THE Christmas tree was dressed, and Curly Locks knew it. If she could only get a peep at it she would be satisfied, but the parlor door was fast closed, so to remain until supper was over. Could she ever wait so long?

She did not dare to try if she could enter, so she ran out on the piazza to her little friends, hoping the time would not seem so very long before her desire for a sight of that beautiful tree could be gratified.

She knew it was beautiful for mamma and papa had said so, besides, it was full of fairies—fairies with wings, and birds, and [illegible], it would be impossible to tell of all the wonderful things that it contained.

Curly Locks heard some one walking in the entry, and ran to see who was there. It was Katie—careless Katie—going into the parlor on some errand for mamma. Suppose she should leave the door open when she came out, if it was ever so little space, that she might peep through, would it not be glorious?

And sure enough careless Katie well deserved her name, for closing the door with a bang the latch failed to fasten, and the very space was left that the child had been so eagerly waiting for.

To steal softly in was the work of a moment, and as the magnificent tree stood revealed to her view she was lost in amazement; all minor things were forgotten as she gazed with wondering eyes at the vast treasures with which the branches were loaded.

Fairies! why there was any quantity of them, fairies of every kind, and prominent among them all was such a beauty arrayed in blue and silver, with little tinkling bells and wreaths of roses all about her.

Then there were birds just ready to fly, colored lanterns waiting to be lighted, gold and silver fruit, besides luscious oranges, [illegible], pears, plums and such a wealth of great clusters of grapes; also ladies riding in carriages with horses on a full gallop.

The little girl was enchanted, and sank down in papa's great easy chair, overcome by almost too much gazing at so many beautiful objects, for in all her life she had never imagined anything half so splendid before.

Curly Locks saw away up on the tree, very many little old men, with long, white beards, staggering under the weight of immense baskets which they carried on their shoulders, and she wondered what they contained.

There was Santa Claus, too, almost at the top of the tree, so high up that she could scarcely see him at all, and such an immensity of glittering rings and chains, that her eyes were quite dazzled with their splendor.

She wondered what mamma would say if she knew her little girl had stolen, without permission, into the sacred precincts of the parlor; and how would she ever get out again without being seen?

If she had only waited for the rest how much better it would have been. Thinking thus she nestled down into the great arm-chair.

It was such a cosy place to be in, so soft with cushions, and she so weary, playing so hard all day, and the beautiful tree just before her, with the little blue fairy gazing right down into her face.

The little girl sat quiet for a long time, her eyes cast down to the floor, thinking of the consequence of her disobedience, when she was startled by the sound of low, sweet music.

She looked quickly around, and could scarcely believe real the sight which met her eyes, for the blue fairy had descended from the tree, and waving to and fro a wand which she carried in her hand, was warbling in an exquisitely-toned voice, the following incantation:

> Fairies of the Christmas tree,
> At my summons fly to me
> [illegible] gather all,
> [illegible]
> So that Curly Locks may see
> Wonders from the Christmas tree!

At this summons there was a flutter of wings, and gentle wavelets of air passed over the wondering face of Curly Locks. Fairies from all parts of the tree were soon hovering around the singer.

Birds, with their glittering plumage hovered overhead, fairy bells were lighted as if by magic, and away on the soft carpet of pine needles, their twinkling feet lost in the luxuriance of its nap.

Carriages with the beautiful ladies and swift ponies drove rapidly along, and the little white bearded men unloaded their baskets, and heaped up great piles of crystallized sugar plums of every hue in all parts of the room.

Santa Claus, too, with his good-natured countenance, walked over the floor blowing huge masses of smoke from a little stump of a pipe, and making the air redolent with the sweetest perfume. The beautiful fruit was rolling about the floor impelled by unseen hands, and everything was in motion.

Curly Locks sat quietly in her corner of the great arm-chair, waiting with eager eyes, this enchanting spectacle, when suddenly the blue fairy disengaged herself from the clinging arms of her companions, with a gliding motion approached the child, and with a graceful bound poised herself on her tiny feet on the trembling knee of Curly Locks, bearing in her arms a little ornamented jewel casket.

Sweetly smiling, she spoke with a voice like the far-off echo of an æolian harp:

"Dear little Curly Locks," she said, "I bring to you a fairy gift which you must ever wear in remembrance of this day."

And touching the lid of the casket, it immediately opened and the little girl beheld inside, lying on a bed of quilted satin, a bracelet brilliant with precious stones, yet so tiny that it would scarcely encircle her smallest finger.

The fairy, taking it into her tiny hands, said:

"Let me clasp it on your arm, and when your eyes rest on it, remember the little fairy Melanie, who is now before you. Besides its extreme beauty," she continued, "this jewel possesses other qualities far more valuable to its owner. Give heed to its warnings, and it will ensure to you not only amiability of character, but also the warmest affection from all whom you most value. So long as your conduct is free from blemish, the bracelet will remain passive on your arm, but when temptations assail you, and in your weakness you are ready to yield to them, you will find it cling tight to you, and the greater the danger, the more painful will be the pressure. Be attentive to its admonitions, and be happy! And now a merry Christmas to you, little Curly Locks!"

As the blue fairy lifted the bracelet from the casket, the little girl was surprised to see it enlarge until, when adjusted to her arm, it fitted to nicety.

The fairy then flitted away, and Curly Locks saw her alight among her companions, when the hurly-burly once again raged around her with increasing violence. The little girl was once more lost in reverie.

Again she thought of mamma, and a feeling of dread came over her as she saw the beautiful things tossed at such a wild rate about the floor.

The grapes were crushed, the golden fruit broken, the birds were scarcely able to fly, the little men were languid and drooping, the pretty lanterns were burning out, and even Santa Claus put his pipe in his pocket, and sat down with a weary sigh on a footstool in the corner.

Curly Locks was troubled; she would surely be blamed for all this mischief. What should she do? If it was possible she would steal from the parlor and stoutly deny ever having been there at all.

Scarcely had this thought dawned upon her when a sudden pain seized her; the bracelet was warning her already, and was pressing almost into the very flesh.

With a rapid motion she sprang from the chair to find herself in the presence of all the family. It was dark night, and all the gas lights were faintly burning; but the tree was glowing with its many colored lanterns; the fairies were all in their own places; the golden fruit once more shone in its proper location; the little old men were again bending under their load of goodies; the ladies were driving among the branches, and, in fine, all things were again restored to order.

Curly Locks was bewildered. Little brothers and sisters were laughing, and mamma was holding her fast in her loving arms.

She looked for the blue fairy, and found her in the old place, very demure and innocent, just as if she had been there all the time, and had never played such mischievous pranks as the little girl had just been the witness of.

She looked at her arm. There, sure enough was the beautiful bracelet. But when Curly Locks related her wonderful story, all the little folks thought mamma looked wise, and knew more about the bracelet, at any rate, than she chose to tell.

"JERRY."

BY PHYLLIS.

IT was the glad holiday time, yet he was starving! Not hungry as you or I might be, had we fasted for ten or twelve hours at a stretch, but literally dying for want of food. He lay back in the dingy doorway exhausted, half unconscious, his one friend clasped to his breast. His face was dirty and of a leaden hue, the lips a pale purple, and his hands were as the claws of some untamed thing.

Heavily fell the rain upon the darkening street; the chill, bitter fog of the December night grew momentarily deeper, and, through it the raindrops pushed their way sluggishly. Little Jerry, lying in the comfortless shade of the dull doorway, scarcely heeded how the moisture came that saturated the wretched rags that clothed his frame.

For two long days no food had passed his lips. The deadly fever that had seized on him a fortnight ago, which left with him, had killed the sense of hunger, but yesterday it had left him, just as the break of dawn, and with it began a wild craving for food of some—of any sort. Wearily he had lifted his tired little head from the miserable pillow of damp sacking that supported it to ask in feeble tones for drink, for meat, to find himself in that darksome cellar alone!

It was a horrible shock to the child. He had lain unconscious, caught by the fever's deadly clutch, whilst the woman with whom he had lived ever since he could remember anything had succumbed to that same fever's influence, and had died and been buried.

A miserable drunken creature, in a way kind to him when sober, drink to her was drink overpowered her, but as she was, the only protector he knew. Whether she was his mother, or whether late had just drifted him into her path the child never knew, but the sense that she was lost to him for ever filled him with an awful dread.

He knew it when no voice answered his in the early gloom of that winter's morning, when his parched tongue had cried aloud without response.

When he had dragged his worn limbs to the pallet where she used to lie and found she was no longer there, weak as he was and crushed by this sudden knowledge, he hurried back to his own bed, and with nervous, feverish hands sought there for something that in his terrified haste he could not find.

He whistled in a sobbing fashion, and at last, languidly, a tiny shaggy soft thing crept to him and sought his arms, and with the puppy, his only and most passionately prized possession in his arms, he groped his way to the door and found himself upon the street just as the first faint streaks of dawn grew in the sullen east.

That was yesterday. He had met a slattern on emerging from his lair and had stayed her to ask eagerly, piteously:

"Where is mum?" and she had answered:

"Ye've the right to ask—y'ave! After given 'er the fever as killed her. Get along wi' ye, ye young varmint."

He got along, and all day, oppressed, too, by the weakness that held him as its prey, he sat in shaded doorways or gaunt archways, hardly knowing that the demon hunger was gnawing at him. Not heeding either, because hardly able to bear the whinings of the starving puppy he held to him with such tenacious grasp.

But as the next day broke he knew that he wanted food, and a sickening desire for it arose within him. But how to get it! In all that big, great city, who was there to give meat to this poor stricken being? Not one!

It was nobody's business! Many men, good men and true, were they sure he was starving, could they see him, was his miserable case placed exactly beneath their benevolent noses, would, I know, have given him sufficient to keep him in clover for the rest of his life.

But then it takes so long to bring these miserable cases beneath the noses of the benevolent ones, that myriads die whilst the attempt is being made, and only one out of the many is saved.

It seemed to him that he must have dozed a while, as when next his dim eyes looked with discernment upon the world, the darkness of night was falling. The rain, too, was heavier, and through it the lamps that lit the wretched by-street where he crouched, shone with a lurid light.

The little dog was dead, but the child did not know it. I am not always glad to think he did not know that. He held it still fondly, convulsively clasped to his breast, and as the body was yet warm it did not dawn upon his dulled mind that life was gone from it.

He sat quite still, his head drooping somewhat forward, and one could see that his face might have been pretty but for the stamp of death present, and of misery, now nearly passed, that disfigured it.

By-and-by, as he still sat there faint and weak because of the ravening and gnawing feeling within, a young man came swinging down the dingy street—a young man, gaunt to emaciation, with hollow cheeks and deep-set eyes, and altogether a face suggestive of famine.

It was a good face! The devil had planted a line here and there in it—cynical curves round the thin lips, a mocking light in the eyes, a matured expression of scorn towards the world in general. He looked as if he were always carrying on a bitter warfare with his kind.

His clothes were threadbare, his hat shocking. Beneath his arm he hugged a handful of shabby books as if his very soul (although he would have scorned a belief in one) was centred on them. As indeed it was. A student evidently; out at elbows, penniless.

"Eh! what have now we here?" said he, stopping abruptly before the half insensible boy and poking him with his stick. "Another starveling! Come, speak up, child; what ails you, eh?"

Roused by this rude address and dreading all things, Jerry lifted his dull eyes and turned a suppliant smile upon his questioner.

It was a woeful little smile, entreating, imploring, and openly deprecating the blow that he had so plainly expected. All his poor little life long blows had been his portion.

"See," said the artful-looking young man, with a sardonic smile, "starveling, I am not [illegible] you don't look sharp." He thrust his hand into his pocket and brought out three coppers and a dime. "Here, catch!" said he, chucking the silver coin to the boy, who, by a superhuman effort caught it, and then turned a glance of passionate gratitude up to his unknown friend.

"Don't," said the latter with his unpleasant laugh. "I expect I've done you the worst turn of any. It was a gross liberty on my part to seek to prolong your days. You will fling that money into the nearest gutter if you have a grain of sense; if not, make it last for two days. It is more than I shall have to live upon for that length of time." He paused, and then said abruptly, "There's a shop around the corner."

The boy had dragged himself up by the lintel of the door with a view to thanking him properly in spite of his contemptuous prohibition, but with his last words the young man [illegible] and [illegible] the midst of the passing crowd, carrying his wager, wild, seeking face out into the turmoil of the great city.

Jerry, still hugging to his breast the dead dog, moved slowly and painfully down the street, turned the corner, and stopped at last before the lighted windows of the cookshop to which he had been directed.

A delicious perfume came from the open door, the window, aglow with gas, showed dainties so coarse to you or me, but so delicate to the famished boy that he almost fainted at the sight of them.

For a minute or two he let his gaze feast itself upon the rich display, and then slowly opened his dirty emaciated little hand to look at the talisman that should give him his share of the good things he craved.

His dime lay upon his palm, and the child's eyes grew bright again, half conquering the death sleep that had so nearly closed them only now, as he stared at it. A whole, whole dime!

Alas! two other eyes beheld that coin at the same moment. A great, rough, villainous-looking creature, half boy, half man, peered over the child's shoulder, saw the coin, stooped yet a little nearer as a hawk above its prey, and then the little dirty palm was empty, the blessed life-giving money *gone!*

Poor Jerry! A sensation as of a deadly chill ran through him, and for a moment he reeled heavily against the bars of the window.

But after that it seemed to him that he thought no more of it, he gave in, though not conscious of the fact, quietly surrendered himself to death. It was all over. No hope, no life—nothing was left!

Perhaps, indeed, he scarcely knew how things went with him for awhile, but instinct at least led his dying footsteps back to the old horrible home—the loathsome cellar in the squalid court.

With faltering feet, with a dull stupid despair upon his half-dead little face, with the now cold and stiff puppy pressed to his heart, he descended the stone-steps, and like a wild thing stricken sore, sought his lair.

Inside all was still, all was dark. A horrible silence prevailed, a very blackness of darkness that might be felt. He began to be frightened—horribly frightened.

He put the dog down, and pressed the palms of his hands tight—tight against his eyeballs, that he might not see the gruesome shapes of which the dread gloom seemed full. Teeming shapes that changed ever and ever, and drew nearer and touched him, as he thought, sometimes his hair, and now—ah! now his cheek.

And then the harsh racking cough, that had been his for a twelve-month, caught him, and shook his thin little frame so roughly in its rude grasp that he had to take down his hands from his eyes to press them to that side where the pain was most cruel; but he still kept his eyes fast closed lest he should see those weird awful creatures dancing here and there in the obscurity.

He was cold—so cold! He shivered and shook with terror, and with something else—that last dread icy chill that every moment crept closer and closer to his heart. And after awhile he sat down and let himself fall quietly backwards until his poor tired head lay upon the cold, damp pavement.

He put out a feeble hand, and finding the dead dog, mechanically drew it nearer to him. And then a wonderful thing happened!

All at once the cellar, it seemed to him, grew full of light. A light, strange, awful, marvellous, such as you and I have never yet seen. And in it stood—One!

A most gracious figure! Tall, a little bowed, and clad in a long garment, than which no snow, freshly fallen, was ever half so white. And the face—who shall tell the divine fairness of it?

Little Jerry could not have described it then, but as he gazed on it, he knew all at once the fullest meaning of the words "Love" and "Peace" and "Rest."

And the figure stooped and gathered to his breast the little frozen boy, and suddenly a soft delicious glow ran through his numbed veins. And Jerry let his tired head fall gently back against that tender bosom.

And heavier and heavier grew the weary limbs, and then suddenly, oh, so light! And presently he felt himself lifted up—ever upwards—and carried away—away.

And never more did little Jerry know cold or hunger or fear or despair, and never again did darkness trouble him, for

"[illegible] there is no night there."

A FIGHT between about 100 crows and perhaps 200 or 300 English sparrows was witnessed at Cumminsville, Ohio, just before sundown, a few days ago. The crows were returning to their rookery from feeding, when they were attacked by the sparrows. Four or five of the latter would get after one crow and peck it so badly as to almost disable it. In fact, three or four fell to the ground, being so badly injured as to be unable to fly. The fight resulted in the complete rout of the crows. One of those picked up was found to have had both its eyes literally picked out.

SHE was a gushing schoolgirl, with the idea of matrimony as the height of poetic bliss, and she was working off rhapsodies into the somewhat unsympathetic ear of Mrs. William Dear. "When your husband comes home from his toil," she asked, "does he not woo you to rest with honeyed words?" "Well, I don't know about honeyed words," responded Mrs. W. Dear; "last night all he could say was, 'M'ria, if you can't untie the knots in these laces, I shall go to bed in my boots, as I did last Saturday.'" That gusher's matrimonial [illegible] was promptly checked.

THE PASSING TIME.

The years are going. Let them go!
They're borne away the golden dream,
The opal light and roseate glow
Which ever round youth's pathway beam,
With bliss of love's sweet overflow
As swept they on; but let them go.

The years are going. Let them go!
Their silver sheen has fled for aye,
Like gleams of light from off the stream,
When night's dark pall, with somhre sway,
Hides e'en the star light's tender gleam—
'Neath darkening wing, they onward go.

The years are going. Let them go!
I'm ever debtor to them still,
Though often bowed with sorrows deep,
They brought me more of good than ill—
More to hoard and fondly keep
Than bear away; so let them go.

The years are going. Let them go!
While question I if duties done,
If deeds of charity and worth,
If daily larger viet'ries won
In overcoming ills of earth,
Have made them richer, fleeter go.

The years are going. Let them go!
What now to me the mines of gold,
The wealth of science, art, or pen,
When flows Life's river, darkly cold,
With gleams of light I scarce may ken?
I hail their fleetness, bid them go!

The years are going. Let them go!
They bear me onward toward the west,
Where, in life's golden afterglow,
Float welcome isles of peace and rest—
Fair isles with heavenly promise blest,
Toward which, with trust, I gladly go.

THE CHILDREN'S SEASON.

While human nature is ready enough to follow the apostolic example, and "put away childish things" when the age for them is past, it is ready from time to time, if it be sound and healthy human nature, to share in the many interests of childhood, particularly at the present season, or to forget family cares and business worries in a game of romps with the little ones.

This occasional return to youthful fun and frolic is such an inborn necessity in some natures, that one is sometimes inclined to call the generosity of toy-giving aunts and take-you all to-the-pantomime uncles not altogether disinterested. A gray-haired grandfather will go on his hands and knees to superintend the growlings and prowlings of a mechanical bear, with a face of extreme absorption, while the children for whose amusement he labors have grown tired of the toy, and are taken up with something else.

Bachelor lawyers, who have no juvenile excuses of their own, are known to fish desperately for invitations to join the parties of their neighbors' children; nay, in extreme cases, as many as four or even five grown-ups have gone to the pantomime under cover of one child.

One reverend gentleman, famed as a preacher, having no children at all, yet buys unto himself stores of nursery and holiday picture-books, and will spend a whole evening in admiring discussion of them. Which of us, indeed, in his inner consciousness, cannot confess to a sneaking enjoyment of the pleasures we ostensibly provide for our juvenile kith and kin?

Like all humane sympathies, this sympathy with the concerns of children has increased of late years. All the surroundings of child-life receive constantly increased attention.

The nursery, once the limbo of old carpets and ancient furniture, old chairs, and out-of-date engravings, is now brought into the realm of art. Stained floors, soft rugs, tiled basin-stands; wall papers, whereon Bo-Peep, Little Boy Blue, and the Four-and-twenty Blackbirds repeat themselves; pretty cups and saucers, tablecloths with dainty colored borders—these graces of life are all to be found in the modern nursery. Sympathy, half with the children of to-day and half with these children of the past, ourselves 'as was'—a kind of self pity when we reflect how we would have liked such things—such sympathies make us lavish.

Only the other day, visiting at a crowded house, I was lodged, with many apologies, in the nursery of two little girls, who were away at the time. Full of comfortable arrangements and contrivances, it was a room not to be despised; and when I woke in the morning and looked up, lo! the roof was painted blue like the summer sky with little white clouds, and a cornice of garlands and Cupids charming to behold!

I thought of the nursery of my childhood in the attic flat of a town-house, with furniture Spartan in its simplicity. I recalled those weary hours of open-eyed wakefulness, called by nursery-maids "going to sleep", and the fascination and terror of a sloping window in the roof almost above my bed, which, from its position, was uncurtained, and through which, in the dark winter nights, we from time to time thought we saw eyes look in.

The mere suggestion was enough to make us bury our head under the bedclothes in shuddering fear. That the window was too small to admit the burglar, whom we imagined to be lurking outside it and watching us, was but small comfort—the thought that he was there filled us with inexpressible dread.

Reason and observation have since convinced me that burglars do not habitually spend the night on steep-pitched, snowy roofs, and that it was only some homeless, hungry cat whose dimly seen face, looking in, raised our childish terrors. But I have a kind of pity still for those little fluttered hearts in the old night nursery.

Among other childish things, besides nursery furniture, undergoing improvement, picture and story books must not be forgotten. The coarse, almost repulsive, little woodcuts, sometimes daubed with color, which, intended to assist, really served to fetter our imaginings of Red Riding Hood and Golden Hair, are things of the remote past, and nursery classics receive the most perfect illustration at the hands of skilled artists.

A thousand elucidations of meaning, too, we owe to these gifted pencils and brushes. Who, for instance, knew the real facts of the case when "the Dish ran away with the Spoon", before the artists of late years explained them in a few magical strokes? We have all repeated the words of the story, thinking them a mere farrago of nonsense.

We had no idea of the clandestine meetings, connived at evidently by his relatives, the Plates, leading up to the rash elopement. We were quite ignorant, too, of its tragical denouement—how he fell, and was smashed into little bits; and she, poor thing, was marched off between her hard-featured, unrelenting father, the Knife, and her mother, the Fork—the latter a strait-laced dame, of whose very existence we had no idea.

Among childish pleasures, perhaps the most enviable and, we fear, the most unattainable to us older folks, are those of the imagination. The visionary world in which children pass so many happy hours is round us, too, if we could only see it; but our eyes are holden by the cares of this world, perhaps. We listen to, wonder at, and are amused by their glowing fancies; but are ignorant and unaware, except when they choose to interpret.

Who, for instance, could hope to "put a patch" on the experiences of those two little boys who spent a snowy day during the Christmas holidays, tiger-shooting in their father's dining-room; and as one, making his cautious way among the legs of the dinner-table, for the nonce a pathless jungle, was hailed by the other with, "Any tigers there, Bill?" he answered gloriously: "Tigers? I'm knee-deep in them!"

Grains of Gold.

Heaven is sunshine will requite the kind.

An ounce of cheerfulness is worth a pound of sadness to serve God with.

Cheerful looks make every dish a feast, and it is that which crowns a welcome.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

As every lord giveth a certain livery to his servants, charity is the very livery of Christ.

There are few occasions when ceremony may not be easily dispensed with, but kindness never.

I love these little people; and it is not a slight thing when they, who are so fresh from God, love us.

Who will not give some portion of his ease, his blood, his wealth, for others' good, is a poor frozen churl.

If all the year were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work; but when they seldom come, they are wished for to come.

When I play with a child, render it kind service, sensibly increase its pleasure, I confer a present favor, and I do more—I help to form an affectionate spirit.

Be not frightened at the hard words "imposition", "imposture"; give, and ask no questions. Cast thy bread upon the waters. Some have, unaware, entertained angels.

He best uses Christmas who makes his home so happy that his children cannot be enticed from it. A happy childhood is a saving talisman through life. The angels that hover over his mother's chair follow a man always.

Femininities.

Modesty is the citadel of beauty and virtue.

Jealousy means not great love, but little faith.

To love and to be loved is the greatest happiness of existence.

To extinguish the flames from kerosene oil use flour profusely upon them.

When a girl is little she has a doll baby; when she grows up she has a dolman.

The woman question: "Can you let me have a little money this morning, dear?"

Salt sprinkled over anything that is burning in the stove will prevent any bad odor.

Very long and narrow pocketbooks for women are the very latest fashion in that line.

A lady is a human being of the feminine gender who is not afraid to be called a woman.

The dearest object to a man should be his wife, but it is not unfrequently her clothes.

Applies to mothers only—Among the impossibilities may be mentioned an ugly baby.

However much you are provoked, never find fault with your husband before other people.

Mrs. Warren, of Colorado, said to be worth $10,000,000, made her money by cattle-raising.

The heart of a young woman in love is a golden sanctuary which often enshrines an idol of clay.

Cardinal Newman says a gentleman is one who never inflicts pain. This is rough on the dentists.

He, before the wedding: "You are sure you won't be nervous at the altar?" She, four times a widow: "I never have been yet."

The average of superstitious men is about one in ten, while one out of every five women are inclined to believe in omens and signs.

He, desirable catch: "How slender Miss Willoughby is." She: "Yes, and they say her mother was just like her once. She weighs over 240 now."

Confidence. Bertha: "Grandma, is our teef dood?" Grandma: "No, darling; I've got none now, unfortunately." Bertha: "Then I'll give oo my nuts to mind till I come back."

"A visitor to a jail," notes a New York paper, "will be apt to find that the cell occupied by the most infamous malefactor is distinguished by the fact that it is the most lavishly decorated by flowers."

Poultry raising is a business that is especially suitable for women. They will attend to the numerous small details which are necessary, while but few men are willing to give the time that is requisite.

"I do believe," said a lawyer, glancing at his opponent, "that my learned friend has been inoculated with stupidity." "Perhaps so; but the general belief is that you have it the natural way," was the reply.

Thimbles are now worn when eating grapes to prevent the fingers from becoming stained; but on all other occasions, and among society ladies who really know what's what, the wearing of a thimble is considered low.

"You asked me to bring you a little 'pin money,'" said a young husband to his wife. "Yes, dear," said the lady, expectantly. "Well, to save you the trouble of going out this cold weather I have brought you some pins instead."

A New Hampshire woman, 85 years old, has been quite busy since last May. She has made 5 quilts, cut and braided 27 woollen rugs, made 2 sheets and 12 pillow cases, and, besides all this, she has knit stockings, mended clothes and did considerable other work.

Miss Clara: "Mr. Featherly paid my eyes such a lovely compliment last night, Ethel." Miss Ethel: "Yes? Something about their being like diamonds, too brilliant for good taste at the breakfast table?" Miss Clara: "Yes." Miss Ethel: "He told me the same thing."

It was midnight, and an impassioned lover in a West-End drawing-room knelt at the feet of his heart's choice and exclaimed: "Darty, I will do anything in this world to make you happy!" "Do you mean it, George?" "I do, I do, darling." "Then, for mercy's sake, go home and let me go to bed!"

A lady in Milton, Pa., who was accosted by a rascal just at dusk the other evening, defended herself in a novel way. She was returning from marketing, and had in her basket a piece of bologna sausage, which she pointed at the fellow, crying out: "You scoundrel, if you touch me I'll shoot you!" Supposing it was a pistol she had, the man took to his heels.

"What do you think of Mrs. Jones?" "I don't know; I—" "Oh, I think she's a nice person enough; but, then, she is so egotistical." "Yes?" "Yes; I was asking her something or other about the Brookes, and she said that she never troubled herself about anybody's business but her own. Don't you call that egotistical?" "Really, you shouldn't be so severe. It may be only narrow-mindedness."

To clean black dress goods, take an old black kid glove, cut into small pieces and let stand over night in a pint of soft water. In the morning add as much more warm water as will be needed, also a few drops of ammonia. Have the goods well brushed, then with a sponge wet them on the right side with the water and rub quite hard; smooth with the hand and hang out of doors in the shade; when nearly dry iron on the wrong side.

Midnight. Poor wife, to husband whose loud snoring keeps her awake: "Charlie! Charlie! Do stop snoring! Turn over on your side." (Nudges him). Husband, only half awake, grunts, turns on his side and continues to snore. Wife has a happy idea; remembers a line from an article called 'How to prevent snoring;' gives her husband a second nudge, which elicits another grunt. "Oh, Charlie! If you would keep your mouth shut you'd be all right." Charlie, still semi-conscious: "So would you."

Masculinities.

Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices.

Man loves little and often, woman much and rarely.

A Connecticut girl has gone insane from being kissed in the dark.

A New England man committed suicide rather than go to the almshouse.

A Georgia man advertises that he will be hung in any man's place for $15,000.

General Grant's widow visits his tomb in Riverside Park, New York, every Sunday.

He that is sorry for his sin, mends his pace; he that forsakes it is at his journey's end.

Men who cover themselves with glory sometimes find that they are, after all, very thinly clad.

The old emperors used to sign their names in green ink when under age, but when of age, in purple.

Husband (dressing)—Where in the world are my boots, my dear? Wife—On the mantlepiece, where you left them last night.

Bismarck and Gladstone were both born on Friday, and so were Sir Isaac Newton, George Washington and Martin Luther.

Even if a boy is always whistling "I want to be an angel," it is just as well to keep the preserved pears on the top shelf.

A Southern paper says that a young widow of that place has just celebrated her wooden wedding by marrying a blockhead.

Prize fighting is a disgrace to civilization, but somehow or other we all seem to take a little interest in finding out which man licked.

A man in this city has figured it out that a person's jaw travels 107 miles in the tasks of eating and talking in an average life of 70 years.

A young lady in Illinois recently became so much embarrassed by a proposal from her lover, that in her agitation she swallowed a needle.

Millionaire Carnegie advises young business men to shun three things. First, liquor drinking; second, speculation; third, endorsation.

A Jersey City watchman recently saw a man going home late at night and shot him to make sure, as he thought he might possibly be a thief.

An English medical journal has offered a prize to anyone who discovers the cause of baldness. We'll take it. Baldness is generally caused by loss of hair.

The great legal phenomenon at Jackson, Mich., is a lawyer who eloquently defended in court, the other day, a man who had stolen from him an overcoat.

It amuses old married people to see the young bride faithfully trying to have her dresses made to suit her husband's idea of how a woman ought to dress.

Who supports the church festival? The young man. Who, from his small salary, contributes to the church concert, the church dinner and the church bazaar? The young man.

"Yes," said the old man, "I hev allus found it best to pay cash. I hev paid cash fur everything I've got 'ept my wife. I got her fur nothin', an' she's the dearest thing I ever got."

On Jenny Lind's coffin was placed by her husband a wreath of myrtle made from a tree planted years ago by the great singer herself in the shape of a tiny twig plucked from her wedding wreath.

Jay Gould has only grown indifferent as to his wearing apparel within the last few years. He once paid big tailor bills, and on one occasion gave $75 for a pair of suspenders with gold buckles, and he wore them.

Aunt Minerva, to fashionable niece: "Do you expect to do anything in the direction of charity this winter, Clara?" Miss Clara, brightly: "O, yes, aunty; I am already planning my costume for the charity ball."

The latest financial notion in London and Berlin is an exchange for disposing of superfluous wedding presents. The latest quotations are: "Wine coolers, active; cardine-box sheazers, dull; mixed pickle forks, recovering."

A minister who had been engaged in the war, and had actually carried a rifle in one of the battles, was asked if he had ever killed a man. His reply was that he did not know. He could only say that, observing a flash often repeated come from a certain bush, he at length fired in that direction and put the flash out.

"So you have got a wife," said Jones to a newly married man. "Don't know, don't know," replied the man, with evident hesitation; "sometimes I think I've got her, and sometimes I think she's got me. You see, I've only been married a few months and I can't tell just yet how the blamed combination is going to turn out."

In Germany the average duration of the life of gardeners, mariners and fishermen is given at 58 years; butchers, 51 years; carpenters and bricklayers, 49; shoemakers and tailors, 44; compositors and lithographers, 41, and laborers, 32 years. Of the professions, the average lifetime of clergymen is 67 years; teachers, 57; lawyers, 54, and physicians, 49 years.

Young wife, at dinner-table, sobbing: "I think you—you—are just as mean as—as—you can be. I made that—that apple-dumpling as a pleasant surprise for you, and—and now—you—want me to bring a hand-saw to cut it in two with." Young husband: "Great Jimini, Maria, is that a dumpling? I took it for a cocoanut: (with desperate firmness) I'll eat it now, Maria, if it kills me!"

Sambo: "Yes, sah. De Goode may've been good 'nough when he lived in the Norf, but he's got mighty mean an' unpatriotic since he moved down Sout'." Stranger: "Well, well! What do you charge him with specially?" "Insultin' de colo'd folks, sah." "Impossible! He was an original abolitionist." "Can't help dat, sah. He done put a barbed wire fence 'round his chicken coop, sah, so he did!"

Recent Book Issues.

"Who Cares?" Episodes in the life of Mary Campbell. Facts, not fancies. By Mrs. Harriet N. K. Goff. With an introduction, by Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, just published by T. B. Peterson & Brothers, is an autobiography written in the form of a novel, and while it contains terrible truths it has all the fascination of a romance. Price, 75 cents.

Like in all of Amelia Barr's novels there is something in the air and movement of "Paul and Christina" that stirs the heart as the ocean waves moves the fishing-boats of the Shetland Isles where she locates it. It is a tale of a noble man's love for a wife of strong but fickle passions. There is much of sadness in it, but all ends in a lesson as bright as it is good. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. Price, $1.25.

"Mingo, and Other Sketches," by Joel Chandler Harris. All the papers in this volume are compounded of laughter and sentiment, the latter element somewhat predominating. "Mingo" is an exquisite little sketch. The author's feeling for the negro character, beautifully exhibited in "Mingo," is shown again in the sketch of "Blue Dave." "At Teague Poteet's" is a more elaborate story, dealing with the moonshiners of the Georgia mountains. "A Piece of Land" will also certainly repay attention. Ticknor & Co., Boston. Price, 50 cents.

"Worthington's Annual for 1888," is a series of original interesting stories, biographies, natural history, sketches, poems, etc., etc., for the young. Illustrated with upward of 500 original engravings, printed in color, and several chromo lithographic illustrations, enclosed in a beautiful cover of original and unique design, printed in rich colors. The "Annual" for this year is a great improvement on the preceding volumes of this popular favorite, and will bear a favorable comparison with any juvenile book published. Published by Worthington & Co., New York. For sale by Wilson, No. 111 South Eleventh street. Price, $1.50.

"Rondah; or Thirty-three Years on a Star." By Florence Carpenter Dieudonne. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers. It relates the strange adventures and experiences of four people, three men and one woman, who during a tempest are cast from the earth to a small star, which is as yet in a volcanic state and but partially cooled, Rondah, the heroine, being left behind. They remain there for over thirty-three years, during twenty of which, the winter season, they sleep, as is the habit of the inhabitants of the star, who are mostly bird-people with wings. These bird-people are vegetables, and grow in very large pods. Rondah is subsequently brought to the star, and plays a prominent part in the disclosure of the Sun Island.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Nothing better for children's reading at school could be desired than *The Inter-State Monthlies*, published by the company of the same name at Boston, Mass. They are of the Grammar Primer, Secondary and Intermediate degrees, thus being suitable for all ages of scholars.

The first number of the American issue of *The Woman's World* lies before us. It is a handsome volume of the size of *The Magazine of Art*, profusely illustrated with full page pictures, and smaller ones sprinkled through the text. Oscar Wilde is the editor. The topics are, of course, such as women are interested in, and while fashion plays an important part it is not to the exclusion of matters of general interest to women. Cassell & Co., New York. $3.50 a year in advance.

The Magazine of American History, for December, well sustains the reputation of this admirable periodical as the best and most valuable historical magazine in the county. It is brimful of useful and instructive reading, covering a wide range in the national history, and has an especially attractive paper by the editor, Mrs. Martha J. Lamb, on "Our Country Fifty Years Ago," detailing some incidents in connection with Lafayette's visit to America. Published by and received from the The Magazine of American History Co., New York.

In *The Century* for December, we find the continuation of "The Life of Lincoln." Other articles are: "The United Churches of the United States," "Prison Life of the Russian Revolutionists," "Sea of Galilee," illustrated, "Notes on Parisian Newspapers," and a finely pictured article on "Dunham Cathedral." The fiction of the number embraces "The Graysons," "At Large," and the first part of "The Dusantes." There is also a short story entitled "After the War." Mr. Irving's "Faust" is the subject of two interesting papers. The other articles are all fresh and bright, the poetry is excellent, and the departments filled with timely matter. The Century Company, New York.

Money Makers

don't let golden opportunities pass unimproved; there are times in the lives of men when more money can be made rapidly and easily, than otherwise can be earned by years of labor. Write Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, who will send you, free, full particulars about work that you can do, and live at home, wherever you are located, at a profit of at least from $5 to $25 daily. Some have made over $50 in a single day. All is new. You are started free. Capital not required. Either sex; all ages.

THE MAKING OF SHOT.

Lead shot, though sometimes made of lead alone, is almost always formed of an alloy of arsenic and lead. The arsenic is introduced in the form of arsenious acid or the sulphuret.

The object of the addition of the arsenic is to render the hard, brittle qualities of the lead softer and more ductile, and of the proper consistency to take a globular form.

Owing to the rapid decomposition of the arsenic, it is treated by itself in the bottom of the smelting kettle. A cover is placed over the substance, and its steam, which rises up through the kettle is fastened down.

The lead is then added above the cover, and when melted the cover is lifted out of the liquid mass, which instantly becomes permeated with the arsenic beneath.

The alloy thus produced contains forty-five pounds of arsenic to the ton of lead, and is known as "temper." This again is added, in the proportion of one per cent., to the pure lead, and thus the shot alloy, containing a very small percentage of arsenic is produced.

The temper-pots hold about a ton of metal each. After the shot have reached the bottom of the well of the shot-tower they are at once lifted out by an elevator and thrown upon an inclined drying-table, over which they slide, falling finally into a wire-gauze rotating cylinder. Then they are rolled and ground together, and in this the minute burrs upon them are removed.

From the cylinder another elevator lifts the shot upon a screening-table. This consists of a series of planes arranged at gradually decreasing heights.

Between each two there is an interval. A shot being started at the head of the highest plane will, if perfect, roll from one plane to another, jumping over the intermediate spaces.

If imperfect, however, it tumbles and goes back to the melting-kettle. It should be explained that there are usually several tables, each being devoted to a different size of shot.

The good shot, after passing this ordeal, reaches the separators. The little leaden globes are elevated to the top cylinder of a series, arranged on an incline. The cylinders are conical in form, and covered with perforated sheet brass.

Each cylinder serves as a seive for a particular size of shot, retaining that, and allowing all smaller sizes to escape. The sifting goes on until each cylinder has picked out the particular class of shot to which it is adapted.

The sizes of shot are standard. The smallest is known as "dust," and then comes "No. 12," two thousand three hundred and thirty-six shot going to the ounce.

ANIMAL WORSHIP.—Animal worship is one of the oldest cults. Its remnants are traceable in India and Egypt, as well as in Troy and Greece—nay, among our own forefathers. The cow and the steer, more especially, are to be met with in the mythology of many nations.

In the oldest Egyptian representations relating to the creation of the world, the cow, coming forth out of the primeval waters, appears as the mother of the young Sun-god.

Sacred, gold-horned cows appear in the lays of the Icelandic Edda, even as among the ancient Hindoos. In German and Scandinavian myth, cows and steers play a large part.

When the Germans and the Cimbrians went on their war-raid, two thousand years ago, they carried a brazen bull as a sacred idol with them. Captive Romans, before being set free by them, had to take an oath on that bull's image. A sea-steer was said to be the progenitor of the French royal race. The kings of that line, symbolically preserving the old mythic tradition, first drove about in a car drawn by a team of oxen.

Sacred cows were taken by Norse kings into battle as divine guides and protectresses. Cows were often used by the Northmen as prophetic leaders on important occasions.

PEPPER SWAINS.—In older days Denmark was supplied from Germany with malt drinks, and spices, such as saffron, anise, ginger, and especially pepper, that was the most valued. From this the German commercial travelers acquired the name there of "Pepper Swains, or Bachelors." They entered into an agreement before they left home not to marry; and many of them lived there to old age.

They had to do entirely for themselves, attend to all little domestic matters, even make their own fires if they had any. Several of them became lonely old men, with peculiar thoughts and peculiar habits. Every unmarried man who has arrived at a certain age is to this day called after them in derision, "Peberavend"—Pepperswain, or old bachelor.

A FARMER in Delaware county, this State, the other evening gave a turnip-topping party to his male acquaintances while his wife gave a quilting party to the ladies. The husband had the crop from ten acres, and such turnip topping and such quilting as was done! Over 350 bushels of turnips were topped, and enough quilting done to cover an army.

Get the best and the cheapest. Salvation Oil relieves in the twinkling of an eye. 25 cents.

A million Americans use Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup. Other nations in proportion. 25 cents.

ON FIFTY CENTS A WEEK.

There is no abstemiousness in the world, and no thrift, like the thrift and abstemiousness of the average native of India. Almost alone among the workingmen of the world, he has raised himself nearly above wants, has stripped himself of all the impediments of luxury.

Millions of men in India, especially on the richer soils and in the river deltas, live, marry, and rear apparently healthy children upon an income which, even when the wife works, is rarely above 2s. a week, and frequently sinks to 1s6d.

The Indian is enabled to do this, not so much by the cheapness of food—for, although it is cheap, a European who ate the same food would want five times the money merely to feed himself—as by a habit of living which makes him independent of the ordinary cares of mankind.

He goes nearly without clothes, gives his children none, and dresses his wife in a long piece of the most wretched muslin. Neither he nor his wife pay tailor or milliner one shilling during their entire lives, nor do they ever purchase needles or thread, which, indeed, it is contrary to a semi-religious etiquette ever to use.

The poorer peasant inhabits a hut containing a single covered room of the smallest size, with an earthen platform or two outside it; and, as he constructs and repairs his own dwelling, he virtually pays no rent except for the culturable land. He never touches alcohol or any substitute for it.

There is an idea in England that he eats opium or hemp; but he, as a rule, swallows neither—firstly, because he regards them with as much moral antipathy as any English gentleman, and secondly, because he could not by any possibility pay for articles which, in India, as everywhere else, are exceedingly expensive.

He eats absolutely no meat, nor any animal fat, nor any expensive grain, like good wheat, but lives on millet or small rice, a little milk, with the butter from the milk, and the vegetables he grows. Even of these he eats more sparingly than the poorest Tuscan. Once a quarter, perhaps, he will eat enough, during some festival, but, as a rule, he knows accurately what will sustain him, and would be enraged with the wife who cooks for him if she prepared more.

He is assisted in this economy by a religious rule which we have never known a Hindoo to break, and which is undoubtedly, like the rule against killing oxen, a survival from a military law or custom of the most remote antiquity.

WONDERS OF SLEEP.—Calvin tells of a friend of his reading aloud to him while asleep. The organ of vision was awake and active.

Condorcet, the mathematician, solved one of his most difficult problems while asleep—a problem, too, which had puzzled him during his waking hours.

The North American Indian at the stake of torture has been known to go to sleep on the least remission of agony, and will slumber until the fire is applied to awaken him.

The celebrated pedestrian, Captain Barclay, when accomplishing his extraordinary feat of walking 1,000 miles in as many successive hours, obtained at last such a mastery over himself that he fell asleep the instant he lay down.

Reporters have to make great exertions to keep themselves from sleeping. A few years ago a distinguished member of "the gentlemen in the gallery" took down a speech while he was sleeping. His statement rests on his oath.

A professor of theology in the University of Basle once wrote a sermon while asleep; he found it in his desk the next morning. The preceding night he could not grapple with the sermon as he desired, but the performance of his sleeping hours was quite satisfactory to him.

It is related that Abbe Faria, who acquired notoriety through his power of inducing somnambulism, was accustomed merely to place his patient in an arm-chair, and to tell him to shut his eyes and collect himself; the Abbe then pronounced in a strong voice "Sleep," which was usually successful.

A famous naval officer, when a midshipman, could watch on deck for nineteen hours. This left only five for sleep, which in his case was most profound—so profound that no noise was sufficiently strong to waken him; yet if the word "signal" was whispered in his ear he awoke and was on deck instantly.

Coleridge, the dreaming philosopher, composed "Kubla Khan" (one of his poems) while fast asleep. Next morning he was too negligent to write his stanzas. A few days afterwards he attempted to recall the verses, but they had for the most part fled, and the poem as it now stands is but a fragment.

It is on record that during the heat of the battle of the Nile some overfatigued boys fell asleep upon the deck, and during the attack upon Rangoon, in the Burmese war, the captain of one of the steam frigates most actively engaged, worn out by the excess of continued mental tension, fell asleep and remained perfectly unconscious for two hours, within a yard of his largest guns, which were being worked energetically the whole period.

MAN'S MAKE-UP.—From a chemical point of view, man is composed of thirteen elements, of which five are gases and eight are solids. If we consider the chemical composition of a man of the average weight of one hundred and fifty-four pounds, we will find that he is composed in large part of oxygen, which is in a state of extreme compression. In fact, a man weighing one hundred and fifty-four pounds contains ninety-seven pounds of oxygen, the volume of which, at ordinary temperature, would exceed nine hundred and eighty cubic feet.

The hydrogen is much less in quantity, there being less than fifteen pounds, but which, in a free state, would occupy a volume of two thousand eight hundred cubic feet. The three other gases are nitrogen, nearly four pounds; chlorine, about twenty-six ounces, and flourine, three and a quarter ounces. Of the solids, carbon is at the head of the metalloids, there being forty-eight pounds. Next comes phosphorus, twenty-six ounces, and sulphur, three and a quarter ounces.

The most abundant metal is calcium, more than three pounds; next potassium, two and a half ounces; sodium, two and a quarter ounces; and lasty, iron, one and a quarter ounces. It is needless to say that the various combinations made by these thirteen elements are almost innumerable.

THE ORIGIN OF COAL.—Scientists tell us that there was a time in the history of the earth when there was a hot climate all over its surface, even in the Arctic regions. The theory is that at this time the same kind of plants grew all over the globe.

There was then no animals on the land, and only molluscs in the sea. The plants were principally fungi and lichens of enormous size, gigantic ferns and cone-bearing trees; and there were no flowers, and no fruits fit for eating.

For thousands of years these great forests of plants grew up and died, and other plants grew in their place, until all the low lands became filled with beds of vegetable matter. The crust of the earth not being very strong at this time, parts of it would sometimes sink so as to be under water. Then the vegetable matter would partially rot and become packed so closely that it would turn into peat.

In the lapse of years heat and pressure caused a second change, and the peat turned into a brown coal called lignite. Yet another change turned this lignite into real coal. Thus coal is supposed to be made up of the remains of trees and plants, which have become converted by pressure and heat in carbon, the pure fuel substance, and bitumen, a tar-like stuff evolved by vegetable decay.

The kind of coal depends upon the amount of bitumen in it. It is commonly divided into three classes—anthracite coal, the hardest kind, which has been so long in formation that the bitumen has generally dried up and evaporated from it; bituminous coal, which has much more bitumen in it; and cannel coal, which has most of all. The anthracite is harder and closer grained than other coal, because more heat and pressure have gone towards its formation than were needed to make the other kinds of coal. A still greater degree of heat and more pressure would have brought about another change of the coal and made it into black-lead.

SEVERAL weeks ago a Georgia farmer found a letter in his chicken coop requesting him to have all the chickens nicely fattened up before Christmas. The farmer took it as a joke, but imagine his surprise the other morning to find fourteen of his fattest hens missing.

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Mixed Tricot 75c., $1 goods last week.
Striped Jersey Flannel, down from 45c to 37½c.
All-wool Black Camel's-hair 50c., from $1.
A new Cloaking, 6 stripes and 4 plaids, 54 in. $2.
Seal Skin Cloth, 50 in. $3 to $3.50 yd.

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Men's Jersey Coats, $2.50; the $4 kind.
Heavy seamless ½ Hose, 12½ cents; the 20 cent kind.
The famous "woolly cloud" Glastonbury make Men's Shirts and Drawers, $1 each; the $1.50 kind.
A fair, White Shirt for 37½ cents; the 50 cent kind.
The best Hats for Men and Boys. Genuine Seal and other real Fur caps in every liked shape.

A NEW LOT OF 2000 UMBRELLAS

26 in. natural handles $1.50; 28 in. $1.75.
26 in. Silver and Gold mountings $2; 28 in. $2.25.

ANOTHER STRETCHING OF THE RIBBON counter. Even 180 feet won't do for a great while.
Ribbons from the fancy work "Daisy," with picot edge, at 19 cents for a 10-yard piece, to the 5-inch Satin and Gros-Grain at 50 cents a yard.

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS, $1 TO $30; Dressing-cases, Work-boxes, Jewel-box, $1 to $30. A world of handsome and useful things of these sorts.

HANDKERCHIEFS FROM CHINA, JAPAN, France, Switzerland and Ireland. All-silk, All-Linen. Not one that is cotton or cotton mixed.

Men's, with 1 or 2 in. hem, full size 25c.
Women's hemstitched ⅛ and 1 in. hem $2 doz.
Women's Initial, unlaundried 12½c. each.
For the little ones, 6 in a box 50c. Colored borders.

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BOOK NEWS is made to tell you how you can get your books without doubt or risk. December number (88 pages) with list of Holiday Books, now ready. 5 cents, 50 cents a year.

If you are thinking of a Holiday-present Book, or a Book for your library, send for our new 32-page Book Catalogue. Free to any address.

If you can't come to the Store, a letter's as good as a visit.

JOHN WANAMAKER.

Humorous.

TRYING AND DOING.

We stood in the moonlight's tender glow,
And I thought her the dalntiest girl
That ever had lived. And I loved her so!
She had set my brain awhirl!
For she was charmingly gay that night
As we stood on the shore to the soft moonlight,
And never a soul was nigh.

So I whispered low: "I love you, dear!
And you thrill me through and through!
As I look in your eyes, in the moonlight here,
It is all that I can do
To keep from straining you close to me now
And kissing your eyes and your lips—I vow
It's hard to be good!" said I.

Then she looked up at me with a roguish glance,
And a light was in her eyes
That made my blood leap, and the whole world dance
In a rapture of sweet surprise.
"I suppose it is hard," she roguishly said,
Then softly, and turning away her head,
She added: "What makes you try?"

—U. N. None.

Game leg—Hind-quarter of venison.

Vegetables with toes—Potatoes and tomatoes.

The school question — Please, may I g'wout?

To find out how old a lady is—Ask some other lady.

History of the Middle Ages—The biography of old maids.

"Entertaining" knowledge—Ascertaining the cost of a dinner-party.

An auctioneer's motto: Come when you are bid, and bid when you are come.

Why should a thirsty man always carry a watch?—Because there's a spring in it.

A messenger-boy's diary: "Monday, hired; Tuesday, tired; Wednesday, fired."

"That puts a different face on it!" as the small boy said as his ball struck the clock dial.

We are told of grass in Colorado that is so short you have to lather it before you can mow.

From a lawyer's point of view. The people most sought after are those who do not pay their debts.

The sign "Beware the dog" is not hung up "that he who runs may read," but that he who reads may run.

A matter of money. What the depositor wants to know is not that his money is all right, but that it's all left.

"My motto is, 'Live and let live,'" said the soldier, as he turned his back to the enemy and fled from the battle-field.

"Why do you get intoxicated?" "To drown my sorrows. "And you succeed?" "Well, I'm having a hare time of it: they all swim."

Extract from the evidence in the case. Counsel: "So far as you saw, she was doing her ordinary household duty?" Witness: "I should say so. She was talking."

A chicken fancier is trying to get up a new race of pullets by crossing weather-cocks with Shanghai hens. This is a progressive age. Rope walks will yet be made to trot.

Something has got to be done. It has come to the point now where a man can't tell whether a red flag means small-pox, an auction, an Anarchist meeting, or oysters.

Friend, to happy father: "Hello, Jones, let me congratulate you. I hear you have a new boy at your house." Happy father: "By George! can you hear him all this distance?"

Father: "Come, Bobby, you are all tired out; as hurry off to bed." Bobby, with a slow and reluctant movement: "Pa, you oughtn't to tell a boy to hurry when he's all tired out."

A sign in the rooms of a hotel reads as follows: "Indian-clubs and dumb-bells will not be permitted in any of the rooms. Guests in need of exercise can go down to the kitchen and pound a steak."

"I am so glad," said Miss Prettysweet, looking up from the paper, "that the Government has at last become interested in our coast defenses. Last winter there weren't half enough toboggan chutes to accommodate one-half the people who wanted to coast."

"What's the matter?" asked a gentleman, approaching a crowd on the street. "Man run over by a street car and leg cut off." "Heavens!" he said, forcing his way to the prostrate form. Stooping down he whispered: "My friend, don't you want a lawyer?"

A man in Mexico, who carried a carbine and a revolver and tried to kill another, is described as being "of gentlemanly appearance and good address." If he had carried another revolver and a bowie knife he might have been looked upon as a leader of polite society.

Tommy, the bride's little brother, after the ceremony: "Did it hurt—the hook?" Bridegroom, who "Never did like that boy!": "Hurt—the hook? What do you mean, Tommy?" Tommy: "Why, mother said Lizzie had fished for you a long time, but she'd hooked you at last!"

"My sister Clara," said Bobby to young Mr. Sissy, "was talking to ma about ydur leaving so early last night." "Did she say she was sorry, Bobby?" whispered young Sissy. "No; she said she s'posed you went home so early because very likely your mamma won't let you carry a night-key."

Late one evening a doctor received a note from a couple of fellow-practitioners: "Pray step across to the club; we are one short of a game of cards." "Emily, dear," he then said to his wife, "I am called away again. It appears to be a very serious case, for there are two doctors already in attendance."

Hindoo Home Life.—The Hindoo woman lives in a small room, the floor and walls are of clay, with no ornamentation of any sort whatever, and the least furniture possible. Every morning she has to pray—not for herself, as she is taught that she has no soul—but for her husband, for rain, and for general blessings. Then she spends two or three hours preparing the breakfast. She doesn't eat with her husband, but, perhaps, fans him at his request.

During the day-time, she either sleeps, gossips with other women, or sometimes a reader reads to them from the lives of the gods. These stories are unfit for human ears. They are vile from beginning to end. The children and women are taught them. At night they prepare their husband's meal in the same manner.

They are not protected at all against the weather and dampness, nor are they properly fed and clothed. The rich live the same as the poor. If sick, they are deemed cursed by the gods, and are taken to the stable and left alone. The only food they can get is left by stealth. Thousands die of neglect.

The first day that a Hindoo boy abuses his mother is a festive occasion with his father, who boasts of it to his friends. To be a widow is the sum of unhappiness. She is especially cursed by the gods.

As the husband dies half a dozen barbers' wives rush upon her, and tear the jewelry from her ears and nose. Behind the funeral *cortege* she follows, surrounded by those fiends, who throw her into the water. If she drowns, they say she is a good wife after all. "She has gone to meet her husband."

Tuerr is a celebrated cook in London, about whom it is said that he makes an income of over $10,000 a year. He is attached to no house. This is how he earns his living. In his own brougham he sets out toward evening for the house of some rich man who is going to give a dinner, at which every dish must be above criticism. Here he alights, and, making for the kitchen goes through the process of tasting all the soups, sauces, and made dishes, advising, when his palate suggests, a little more salt here, a pinch of herbs there, a dash of sugar in this entree, a suspicion of onion in that salmis, etc. This done, he pockets his fee of twenty-five dollars, and drives on to the next dinner-giving patron who has bidden him to his feast in this strange fashion. His nightly list comprises many houses all through the London season.

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A clergyman, after years of suffering from that loathsome disease, Catarrh, and vainly trying every known remedy, at last found a prescription which completely cured and saved him from death. Any sufferer from this dreadful disease sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Prof. J. A. Lawrence, 212 East 9th St., New York, will receive the recipe free of charge.

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HOMEOPATHIC

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Latest Fashion Phases.

Not only are the materials, and the trimmings made to accompany them, this winter exceptionally beautiful, but the make of the most fashionable gowns commend themselves greatly to the cultivated mind on account of their elegant simplicity. Two dresses, among many others deserve description:

One, in the new green, is a mixture of velvet and cloth, and few combinations would seem to find so much favor. Down the side, on a foundation of poult de soie, is an elaborate panel embroidered in beads. The width of the skirt appears to be greater than we have been in the habit of wearing, but it flows with much grace, being artfully caught up just where the exigencies of the folds would seem to demand it.

The other shows a new cut of polonaise in the electric-blue Bengaline, closely allied to poplin, draped over velvet of the same shade. Half the bodice is Bengaline, half velvet, the front left loose, the sleeves made with one puff to the elbow, and then a straight piece.

The coat sleeve dies hard, but its days are numbered. In tea-gowns it is being replaced by bell sleeves, with puffs beneath of contrasting material reaching to the wrist; by long sleeves hanging almost to the edge of the skirt; by sleeves made in a series of puffs, or slashed in horizontal puffings from shoulder to wrist, and filled in with lace, gauze, or Crepe de Chine.

In morning gowns, as often as not the material and color of the sleeves and bodice are dissimilar, the upper and the lower portion of the sleeves display the two stuffs used on the dress.

Another consisted of two shades of blue moire, with a long Princesse polonaise of Bengaline trimmed with handsome gold passementerie. The polonaise was caught up quite short on one side, fastening across the front in graceful folds. The bodice was distinguished by gold epaulettes. In many fashionable dresses the wearer has contrived to look as much like a naval officer in full dress as she well can do.

A beautiful evening gown was entirely composed of pink watered ribbon. A straight skirt of lace was almost hidden by a succession of loops of watered ribbon falling from the waist to the hem. There was a polonaise of crepe de Chine of the same tone, which in front was arranged in flat diagonal pleats, fastened on one side; the material from these folds formed a part of the tunic. It was of the new crepe de Chine, with satin stripes, and the sleeves were cut so that they were tight from elbow to wrist, loose and puffed at the top; the back was bouffante.

Many gowns of thin material have diagonal rows of narrow ribbon all over them, and nearly all the ball gowns that have floral trimmings of any kind have long loops and trails of ribbon which blend with the flowers.

There are an unusual number of novelties under the head of fans; some are made in clear grenadine, striped with net or white silk; other have rows of narrow satin ribbon carried across in such a fashion that when closed bordering each rib there are lines of close-set satin bows.

A round-shaped fan, an improvement on the Lady Teazle, is made of the softest marabout, with a picture in the centre, painted with Watteau groups, or something equally delicate, but ribbed fans are certainly more fashionable—some have as many as nineteen ribs, a much increased number; others are well appliqué with lace.

The serpent-ribs studded with silver are new, and these often accompany the kind made with loops of ribbon. But the cheapness of some of the fans brought out for the present season is certainly quite astonishing.

The new nightgown case and other sachets are made with large bows of grenadine or gauze, edged with lace on the outside, and are lined with cardboard to give them stiffness. Others are made with gold tinsel lace over satin.

Very long boxes, painted on the outside, have been brought out for gloves. These cases are now as much a part of a lady's wardrobe as the gloves to put in them.

Every kind of ingenuity is brought to bear in order to encourage the use of fur. The newest idea is to mount the fur for tippets on velvet, with only one strip down the centre, and to trim the muff to match.

Fancy and fur muffs alike are made with bags and purses attached. Lapland fox is much employed for muffs and boas. In Paris natural lynx is worn. It is not of a pretty tone, being just the color of sand, but is light and fluffy. Some of the capes made of it are rather collars than capes, and have boa ends attached.

Uncurled ostrich feathers for bows are another Parisian novelty. For using with these feather bows there are muffs having cocks' heads attached, cocks' combs and all. It remains to be seen whether they will find favor in America.

Feather shawls is another novelty; they are soft, but look like much improved woolen shawls, and do not resemble feathers in the least. Grebe is being used for trimmings for capes, muffs and boas.

A trifle which many women will be glad to hear of is a double flounce of pink silk, mounted on a foundation, and sold to be put inside the hem of dresses. It is far more serviceable than the muslin balayeuse.

A new idea from Vienna is the fireman's belt, made either in leather or webbing, with three straps of leather fastening in front. It looks trim on a slender waist, and is much worn with the Garibaldi and Jersey bodices.

The last notion in gloves is the reindeer; they look like thick washleather of almond color, and fit well. They are also very durable.

Fashion decrees that coats and mantles shall be very long, and in some cases very full, completely enveloping the figure, which is somewhat trying to careful but fervent followers of that fickle dame, who possess short ones, which are perfectly fresh and good.

Walking jackets are to be short, as of yore, and mostly tailor-made. Several, made of thick, warm, woolen material, have the loose fronts, with one or two colored flannel full blouse vests to button in. The fulness is drawn in by a tolerably wide waistband, or by a soft silk scarf sash fastened at the right side, beneath the loose jacket front, drawn across the waist to the left side, and allowed to drop down carelessly.

This fashion will look well carried out in velvet, velveteen, or the newer velutina, for indoor wear. It will also be carried out in children's costumes, and for adults' evening dress.

What would look better than a black velvet, with red silk blouse vest and scarf, or a dark brown, with a deep gold one? This velutina is moderate in price, fairly wide, and in good colors. It will be suitable for comfortable evening home wear, or for day skirts.

The bodices can be made with loose fronts, and waistcoats of folded silk crepe, with one set of folds coming from one side of the bodice slantwise, and passing over the other set from the opposite side. This is principally done with bodices that are cut square for evening wear, and have high collars, standing up around the back of the neck.

White looks well with any dark color. If the loose fronts are not becoming to the figure, they can be pinned in at the waist, and two handsome buttons added as ornaments.

Another material which girls seem to affect for quiet evening wear, is a soft, silky kind of delicate nun's veiling, called Japan crepe. It averages about 44 inches in width.

Among the many new materials for winter gowns which are making their first appearance on well-dressed women, are several with alternate stripes of plain color, and small checks, which look stylish, especially in dark red or blue, or dark heliotrope and golden-brown; also alternate stripes of two colors, powdered over with two colored spots, such as heliotrope and brown, with lighter heliotrope spots on the former, and gold on the latter; or navy-blue and brown, with red spots on the former, and pale gold on the latter.

Then there are faintly marked, narrow-striped woolens, with irregular spots of two or more colors recalling the effect of a good sprinkling from several paint-pots. These are nearly all made up with plain material in various ways.

All drapery is long, but a good deal of skill and ingenuity are exercised in the varied arrangements of folds and draping. One pretty way of blending velveteen or velvet with woolen material or cashmere is to have a bodice and wide sash of the former, with drapery and revers of the latter.

Odds and Ends.

ALL SUITABLE TO THE SEASON.

Among the varieties for Christmas of the fancy lines in the shops, most remarkable are the pin-cushions. In one place there were at least some fifty or sixty novelties, ranging through almost every form of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, crowned with a most charming lady's boot, delicately embroidered on satin and plush. The heel of the boot was contrived so that it would rise, and underneath was a little receptacle for the thimble, scissors, etc. Anything more dainty in the way of a drawing-room pincushion could not well be imagined.

Tennis rackets were covered with plush. A shoe of plush, lined with satin, was fastened across, and here were wall-pocket and pincushion. A palm leaf, with a pretty basket fastened in its centre, both daintily trimmed, was intended for the same purpose.

Small rush baskets, gilded and trimmed in every conceivable manner, were there by the hundred-weight, both as pincushions and as work baskets.

Among them were some very fantastic ideas imported from Paris; one, a mirror, framed with rush, and supported by baskets of a cornucopian shape; another, a veritable sedan-chair, in which were worked receptacles for flowers, not only in the centre, but at every corner.

An excellent workbasket in rush took our fancy; it was beehive in shape, trimmed with silks, and stood upon four legs, one of which was carried above the basket, and ended with a crook handle.

We passed next to the Japanese and Indian departments, piled to their ceilings with every species of ware, from the priceless Cloisonne metal and ivory carved goods, to the figures, embroideries, toys, and dolls, the last named, so quaint, yet pretty, that they will doubtless find many a loving nursery home.

After two hours in this busy world, we arrived at the departments for toys, photograph frames, albums, etc. In mechanical toys, the clown wheelbarrows, the clown race, and the balloon cannot fail to be popular with young and old; the mechanical doll tribe are also rich in additional novelties.

Photograph frames are being made in imitation of pillows and cushions; some in satin and plush are enriched with paintings and embroidery, others have mounts painted on a linen ground or some kind of embroidery.

Among the new albums some had the backs prettily adorned by groups of birds, so well embossed that for the moment we imagined them fresh from the hands of the taxidermist.

One album will be very welcome on a crowded table. It was of brass, and so formed that it gave the appearance of a set of cabinet photographs just slipped into a brass-backed stand; however, a closer inspection proved it to be of the book form, opening from the top, the front letting down. Others of a similar kind were double, in Russia leather, forming two distinct books on a raised desk.

Perhaps there is nothing more acceptable to either girl or women than the basket, of one sort or another, and this is small wonder, for baskets are so useful, and may be made so artistic and pretty.

The tiniest ones, not much larger than a thimble, may be filled with emery powder and the top covered with satin. The little round baskets may be easily converted into pretty pincushions in the same manner.

Strawberry baskets make pretty workbaskets. A pretty way of trimming them inside and out with wadding, and over this draw loosely in puffs a cheap silk handkerchief. If the handkerchief be large enough place the basket in the centre and fold the four corners over so that they will meet in the bottom of the basket. Tack here and there with sewing silk.

Grape baskets may be utilized in the same way, but in this case it would be better to cover only the inside, and to fit the covering smoothly. The outside may be painted to correspond with the color of the lining, also the handle. If expert enough with the needle, pockets to hold the various accessories may be added.

Small market baskets treated in the same way are pretty. The large peach baskets, covered inside and out with cretonne or chints, and ornamented with bright bows, make lovely waste-paper baskets.

A novelty in this line is utilizing the straw "envelopes" in which wine-bottles are packed. Select unbroken ones, paint them with a color, or with some of the popular bronze paints, which will make them quite stiff. Tie a rather wide ribbon round them, with a bow upon one side, fasten a loop at the back, and fit into them common glass tumblers, and the result will be a pretty hanging receptacle for flowers, ferns or grasses. Two or three of them may be joined together with very good effect.

Some of the coarse baskets are covered with crochet, in cord, and lined with satteen of contrasting color.

Confidential Correspondents.

LEGHORN.—The "Clearing House" is an association of national banks in every large city, formed for the purpose of facilitating the banking business.

HARTE.—A "pocket," so used, is the technical name for deposits of nuggets of gold. They are generally holes in the rocks at the foot of some waterfalls into which large nuggets have fallen.

JOHN.—London, Liverpool, New York and Antwerp are among the leading commercial cities of the world. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and New Orleans are among the first in the United States.

JACK.—We do not think you have given too many presents by any means. We meant by "too many" where the lover brought something of value almost every time he called. Your choice of the time for presents show a judgment and good taste.

W. M.—It by no means follows that because your parents died of consumption you are "bound to have it." You have, of course, an hereditary tendency to it, and consequently you should take every care to avoid such causes as cold, damp, the night air, etc., which predispose towards the complaint.

RINGER.—There is no special kind of engagement ring. Some prefer a gold keeper; but, as a rule, jeweled rings are chosen. The opal is foolishly considered an unlucky stone. Pearls, diamonds, rubies, garnets, sapphires, torquoises, etc., are all suitable, either singly or two or more kinds together; it depends upon the taste and means of the donor.

MEMORY.—Careful discipline is our prescription for a bad memory. Give the faculty ample, but not excessive, work. Make it a rule to concentrate your attention on whatever you may be doing at the moment. Sternly resist any tendency to let your wits go wool-gathering; and when you are reading, read slowly and carefully, and pull yourself up at intervals to make sure, by putting the facts or ideas into your own words, that you have grasped them. You may also make some use of the principles of association and analysis.

STUART.—Flora Macdonald, famous for helping the Young Pretender, Charles Edward, to escape after the battle of Culloden, was a young lady of the island of South Uist. Dressed in female attire, the prince passed as her maid servant; and in this guise she, by her courage and resources, succeeded in bringing him safely to the Island of Skye, where he escaped to France. She was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower till July, 1747. Having married a relative, also named Macdonald, she went with him to America, but on the death of her husband returned to Scotland.

WILLIAM H.—A very thin film of silver can be deposited upon a metal surface by using one part of nitrate of silver and two parts of common salt, both powdered and moistened with water, which gives a creamy paste, and applied to the surface of the metal with a piece of cotton wool; wash the article under a tap, and dry in sawdust. The surface of the metal must be cleaned perfectly with emery or some similar substance, or the silver will not take. This is only suitable for articles having little wear, such as barometer and clock dials, which should be varnished to prevent oxidization.

PHINO.—There can be little doubt that you have been taken in. If you can prove a warranty that the takings were $40 a week, and that as a fact they were not, you may succeed in recovering damages against the man who sold you the business in an action for breach of warranty. But the fact that the takings have not been $40 a week since you took to the business is valueless, inasmuch as the seller did not undertake that they should under your management continue to be $40 a week. You appear to have bought the business on a mere statement that you cannot disprove, and without independent investigation. If this be so, you have no option but to make the best of a bad bargain.

H. B. C.—The Hudson's Bay Company was chartered as a fur-trading corporation in the seventeenth century, and, under the name of Ruperts' Land, held the whole of British North America, except Ontario, Quebec, and other eastern provinces of Canada, until 1856, when British Columbia was colonized. When the charter expired, the major part of the company's territories was transferred to the Dominion of Canada. This was in 1869. A portion of the people then resisted the annexation, under Louis Riel, who, afterwards again distinguished himself in the same direction. The company is now assigned, in liquidation of its claims, one-eighteenth of the new lands in the north-west as they are surveyed and settled.

PHARCE.—A lightning conductor generally consists of an iron rod rising vertically from the roof of the building which it is designed to protect, its height being from six to ten feet, and its thickness at the base from two to three inches. Its top is of platinum or gilded copper. From the rod runs a wire cord, or a bar of iron, to the ground, usually terminating in ramifications or in a large plate sunk from eighteen to twenty-one feet below the surface—in many cases in a well. The electric movement, contrary to the popular opinion, is from the ground to the sky; not from the sky to the ground. The effect aimed at by the use of the rod and conductor is to neutralise the opposing electricity of passing thunder clouds, and prevent them from discharging their electricity. But if a discharge occurs, and the rod is struck, then the electricity is conducted to the ground. A lightning rod protects an area having a radius twice its height.

SUB.—You ought not to tempt us on to the quagmire of metaphysics, where we should find ourselves if we attempted to settle the dispute between you and your friend as to whether the dog is capable of thought or acts only from instinct. The subject is one as to which there is no consensus of opinion among the philosophers. Before the doctrine of evolution became popular, most people would have been ready enough to deny any thinking capacity to animals other than man, but the tendency of that theory has been to reduce the difference between him and them to one of degree rather than of kind. It is not for us to dogmatise on a question which will probably be a bone of contention for generations; but we may say as much as this, perhaps—that the careful observations of recent naturalists make it much more difficult than it was formerly to believe that the more intelligent animals are never actuated by anything higher than automatic impulse.